

PRESENTED BY  
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# THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE:

A BOOK OF GUIDANCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

BY  
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## *AUTHOR'S PREFACE.*

The title of this book sufficiently describes its purpose, while a glance at the chapter-headings will show the manner in which the writer has tried to carry it out.

His object has been to give within moderate compass, and in quite untechnical language, such a comprehensive survey of a great and important subject as will afford clear and trustworthy guidance to men and women, whether about to marry or already married; to present such a plain chart of the territory to be trodden that the wayfaring man or woman shall not err therein.

More and more it is coming to be understood that marriage is the last enterprise in the world in which it is safe to engage without a good deal of preliminary thought, or without gaining much information in advance on matters in regard to which it is pathetically easy, and often fatal, to make mistakes which might have been as easily avoided. With the exceptional experience afforded him as the confidant of multitudes of married people who continually seek his advice on their problems, the author has no hesitation in declaring that ninety per cent. of these need never have arisen, or would have solved themselves, had his correspondents had a modicum of knowledge concerning facts which

concerned them intimately, but which often they did not so much as suspect.

It is in order to dispel this ignorance of vital matters, and so to contribute to the sum of married happiness, that **THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE** has been written, and is now sent forth. May it meet with the same great and gratifying success as the same writer's earlier book of counsel and instruction, **WISE WEDLOCK**, which it will be found to supplement in many directions; and may it, in fulfilling its mission, help to build up that new and better England for which we so passionately long!

G. C. B.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE "WHY" OF MARRIAGE.

Love and Marriage — there are no themes so hackneyed, yet of such inexhaustible interest, such un-failing fascination, as these.

For practically all of us, love has at some time or other been the supreme concern in life, imperiously subordinating to itself every other, governing our conduct, shaping our destinies; insomuch that when a man or woman puts it on record—as we remember reading in the autobiography of a woman of exceptional intellectual gifts—that love has had no share whatever in their careers, that they have never felt or inspired that emotion, we instinctively set them down as somewhat abnormal, defective in an endowment as universal as sight or hearing.

We could not imagine a world from which this mysterious attraction of man for woman, woman for man, had been eliminated, or in which it had never made its appearance; we only know that such a world would be an unutterably drab and dreary affair, and feel thankful that—destructive and disastrous as this passion after others, when its manifestations are ill-directed or ill-regulated—the humblest and most monotonous existence as a rule has had its golden vision, its ecstasy of shared and mutual love, an experience which nothing can efface. It is surely well that myriads of

quite ordinary lives are irradiated by this glory, and that, having known it, men and women should feel much as did the poet who said:

Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,  
The joy I have possessed, in spite of Fate, is mine,  
Not heaven itself upon the past has power,  
For what has been, has been and I have had my hour!

Cynics occasionally affect to believe that the share of love in human life has been either exaggerated out of all proportion, or that the emotion has been artificially stimulated through being continually harped on and exalted in the arts, in drama, and in literature, more especially in the modern novel. But though there may be some modicum of truth in this as in most cynicisms—though no doubt there are plenty of young people who see their own joys and woes as lovers mirrored and magnified in those of their favourite heroes and heroines of fiction, of the stage, or even of the screen—yet youths and maidens fell in love, just as frequently, just as intensely, just as inevitably, before as since the arrival of the best-seller, the emergence of the irresistible stage lover or the advent of the film star. Indeed, if certain authors, actors and actresses whom we could all name make such a universal appeal in depicting the vicissitudes of love, it is because they portray a universal sentiment. He who has a tale of love to tell will ever meet with ready listeners; for he speaks of something which intimately concerns, or has concerned, or will concern, each member of his audience.

That which invests love with such exceptional importance is, of course, ultimately its close and direct connection with life itself—life which is kindled by two existences drawn together, fusing for one culminating moment into one, and thus calling into being a third. That is why love, behind an apparatus of gaiety and laughter, pretty follies and adorable absurdities, is at

heart always so tremendously serious, so conscious of its fate-fraught character and mission: for the ancient writer falls short of the truth when he says that "love is strong as death"—it is far stronger, holding as it does the keys of life, which "is ever lord of death." No one so much in earnest as your lovers; are they not the consecrated priests to whom is committed the administration of what is truly a sacrament, the mysterious evocation of the life-to-be?

Well might that passion be serious which leads its votaries to undertake the most momentous step which man's mortal span can register, viz, marriage; a step which for the majority of human beings is yet so normal as to be almost inevitable, so that glancing round any assembly of young unmarried folk in the early twenties we can say with perfect assurance that ten years hence by far the greater number of them will have found their mates, and have seen new lives issue from their unions.

Marriage is immeasurably the most important event in most human lives, and society has marked its sense of that event's significance by surrounding it with the most elaborate safeguards and sanctions; for no community can lightly regard that which is so deeply bound up with its own wellbeing. Society as well as religion proclaims the married estate honourable, because it is associated with responsibilities more diverse and grave than most who enter it can at all realise; it is honourable because it offers a unique field for the discharge of duty, for the exercise of unselfishness, for the development of character, for the training of other lives in strength and beauty; it is honourable, above all, *not merely by reason of its burdens, but of its joys* of mutual helpfulness, mutual respect, mutual unreserved confidence. If we say—echoing an observation which in one form and another has been frequently

made—that there is no enterprise in which complete success is more difficult of achievement than this, we do so in no spirit of pessimism, but rather in the hope of encouraging effort; for the prize of a really happy marriage is so exceeding great that it will far more than repay the self-discipline without which it cannot be won.

Two observations suggest themselves on the threshold of the subject. It is strange on the face of it that while most people clearly understand the need for specialised training and concentrated exertion on the part of those who would win success in every other field or undertaking, almost everybody seems to think that in this particular enterprise—marriage—success ought to come of its own accord to the ignorant, to the undisciplined, to the indolent, as it were by a law of nature. But as there is no law of nature which provides, *e.g.*, that the literary aspirant, or the budding lawyer or Parliamentarian, shall carry off the prizes of his profession, save by an immense deal of thought and toilsome practice, so there is no corresponding law for the effortless attainment of success in marriage.

And this leads us to express regret that while the State and the Church make it almost impossible for two people, once they have entered the "august circumvallations" of marriage, to leave them again if they so desire, the same powers do not take the charitable precaution of making the entering of those circumvallations less fatally—we had almost said less criminally—easy than it is. It ought to be a great deal harder to obtain permission to embark on so difficult and delicate an experiment; and in the opinion of not a few high-minded and clear-sighted people it ought, for everybody's sake, if the experiment has proved an unmistakable failure, to be a great deal less hard to obtain permission to terminate it.



Our second observation is this: the time cannot be too far distant when the civil authorities will require from every candidate for matrimony, male and female alike, a certificate of health; such a commonsense step, though no doubt it will be combated to the last by our reactionaries, who affect to think eugenics a matter for jesting, would alone prevent innumerable tragedies.

Such an object is eminently worth achieving, even though it should involve hardship to this or that couple of lovers, whose individual or mutual satisfaction cannot be allowed to be purchased at the cost of the misery of their offspring. But such a measure, though a good beginning, ought not to be the end of the matter. We should come within measurable distance of the ideal if public opinion were to insist on proof of the attainment of a minimum mental, moral—yes, and economic—standard before granting its permit to two persons to enter a union which is so far from being their own private and exclusive business that its consequences must affect society both in the immediate and the remote future. We all know that one of the worst effects of war conditions was the number of marriages recklessly contracted; it is, similarly, one of the most regrettable features of the housing shortage existing in post-war England that it has actually made ill-considered marriages easier for couples, who nowadays simply go into furnished rooms, instead of saving up for a home of their own.

In the meantime we have to deal with things as they are; and in the present volume we shall not attempt to work out our own Utopia of what the ideal married estate might be like, but seek to offer our readers practical guidance in regard to the Realities of Marriage, a purpose for which we promise to use the very plainest language at our command. With this end in view, it

strikes us as not only far from superfluous, but rather as indispensable, that before going further we should try to obtain a clear idea of the "Why" of Marriage.

People are apt to take the answer to that very pertinent query for granted, to imagine that it answers itself, or that they know the answer instinctively: hence a large number of the wrecks and derelicts that strew the matrimonial ocean, for in so complex an undertaking, which must be of such far-reaching influence upon at least two—but probably far more than two—lives, instinct alone is a poor guide. Instinct is the wind which fills the sails, not the rudder which governs the course of the vessel, and which must be intelligently handled if the vessel is not to drift out of its course, or upon the rocks.

The Book of Common Prayer is absolutely right in insisting that the permanent union between man and woman should never be "taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God;" and its compilers set a good example to after-ages in carefully "considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained." We may, and shall, differ from the divines of the sixteenth century—barely emancipated as they were from mediæval notions—in our view of these "causes;" but they deserve the most unqualified praise for the high seriousness and candour with which they addressed themselves to their task.

In our Western civilisation it is assumed in theory that the all-sufficing and all-justifying motive for marriage is the strong attraction exercised upon each other by two persons of opposite sex; and even where the facts are known to be otherwise, the polite fiction at any rate is kept up that romance has had the leading share in tying the knot. We shall have occasion to *reiterate the opinion that without such powerful mutual*

attraction a marriage will lack a fundamental factor, and this is certainly true so far as the West is concerned; but indispensable as this factor is, we shall as strongly insist that it is by no means the only one to be considered, nor is it sufficient by itself to justify a marriage or to ensure its happiness. Everybody knows of the wretched outcome of many a passionate love-match: the reason being, as has been well said, that as a rule it was only an "in-love" match, a violent but transitory infatuation. The fact is that neither literally nor metaphorically is it possible for any two mortals to "live on love." Assuredly, love is *one of the* "causes for which matrimony was ordained," but taken by itself we shall see that it is inadequate.

Here let it be remarked in passing that among Eastern peoples romantic affection has never occupied the place as a motive for marriage which it holds among ourselves. "Marriage of inclination," writes Mr. A. Mitrie Rihbany, a Westernised Syrian, "preceded by a period of courtship as in the West, is very rare in the East. The contracting of a marriage is not so much an individual as it is a clannish affair. The young people may or may not be acquainted with one another. 'Going with a young lady' is unknown to the East, and is a feature of Western life which Orientals generally condemn. The marriage is agreed upon by the families or clans of the contracting parties, because the family or clan is involved in the conduct and affected by the reputation of each one of its members." Neither the Oriental point of view nor the Oriental procedure is likely to commend itself to us; at the same time we might ponder the author's conclusion, viz., that "the difference of procedure between the East and the West in contracting a marriage does not seem to result in a marked difference in domestic happiness."

Be this, however, as it may, for those who are them-

selves the products of centuries of Western custom, will always be an essential and probably the prime ingredient among the legitimate motives for and by love, needless to say, we mean some mutual attraction, and not the mere crude which almost any well developed woman is capable arousing in perhaps a majority of men. While it will of course, be deemed desirable among all right-thinking people that the parents of the prospective partners should smile rather than frown on the proposed alliance, we may be said to have definitely passed the stage where parental consent was deemed a *sine qua non*—the stage where a Robert Browning and an Elizabeth Barrett had to elope in order to frustrate the overbearing tyranny of an early-Victorian father.

We shall always suspect the worldly wisdom of the "arranged marriage," and look with aversion upon any union cemented only by interest—a mere transaction, in which the heart has not been consulted. We understand to day better than people understood formerly the facts of sex antipathy, and can form some idea of the agonies suffered by girls and women forced by the decree of their families into marriages against which their very flesh and blood cried out. If we were to formulate a general rule, we should say that elders had not seldom the right to dissuade youth from some proposed alliance, but never that of persuading youth into it, the responsibility of the latter course is too great, and while age may have a clearer eye than youth for what is essentially unsuitable in a partner, it does not follow that the most well meaning senior can tell what girl will make some particular man happy, or *vice versa*.

Now it is a remarkable fact, seldom explicitly avowed and yet quite patent, once it has been pointed out, that that which to our mind is an indispensable—nay, the most obvious—motive for marriage, viz., an

verwhelming attraction exercised by two people on each other, is not so much as mentioned among the "causes" for which, in the Church's view, "matrimony was ordained." Those causes as named in the Prayer Book, in the order of their supposed importance, are: firstly, the procreation of children; secondly, "for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication;" and only thirdly, for "mutual society, help and comfort." To the modern mind this is not precisely an exalted view of marriage; that it shows with the utmost clearness, both in its mode of statement and in what it omits, is an attitude towards sex which we are every day leaving further behind.

For mediævalism looked—and its surviving representatives still look—upon sex *per se* with distaste and abhorrence, as a snare and temptation, a kind of necessary evil, an invention it would have been infinitely easier—but for Revelation's pronouncement to the contrary—to set down to Satan than to God; and love between man and woman, being ultimately based on sex-attraction, was too unmistakably suspect to be allowed to figure in an official statement among the legitimate causes for marriage. Since it had mysteriously pleased Providence to ordain that the race was to be kept in being only by a method so inextricably associated with passion and joy, the prime object of marriage could only be the bringing forth of offspring, the end thus justifying, or purifying, the means. And since the indulgence of the sex-instinct was in itself deemed perilously near to sin, it followed that marriage was meant to provide a legitimate excuse for such indulgence in the prospect of parenthood; to this day, indeed, the clerical view regards conjugal relations, unless entered into with the express *intention* of procreation, as at best a venial sin. Lastly, it was admitted that husband and wife were to enjoy each other's

"society, help and comfort;" but to maintain they were to be married lovers would never have occurred to that mediæval spirit which did not disappear with the Reformation.

This spirit, with its deep and sincere distrust of the senses and their satisfaction, with its intense belief in the value of asceticism and mortification, was bound to see in marriage, so far as it was founded on sex-needs, merely a compassionate allowance made to human infirmity; to admit that the gratification of this imperious need formed one of the objects of marriage, would involve a complete surrender of the ecclesiastical standpoint. It is accordingly only consistent on the part of a representative of that standpoint, Dr. H. G. Sutherland, to state categorically that "no one can deny that the sexual impulse has for aim"—i.e., for sole *legitimate* aim—"the procreation of children;" and he quotes with approval a clerical declaration to the effect that "it would be heroic ~~virtue~~ for a wedded pair to abstain

to be openly welcomed as an honoured guest at life's banquet.

We therefore unhesitatingly answer the question as to the "Why" of Marriage by declaring that among the causes for which it was ordained, one of the chief is that mutual satisfaction which lovers gain in the complete possession of each other, quite apart from, and above, the begetting of offspring, desirable as this may be. "Through harmonious sex-relationships," writes Dr. Havelock Ellis, "a deeper spiritual unity is reached than can possibly be derived from continence in or out of marriage, and the marriage association becomes an apter instrument in the service of the world." It is the same writer who quotes a distinguished woman—no other than his wife—as saying: "Sex intercourse is the great sacrament of life, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh his own damnation; but it may be the most beautiful sacrament between two souls who have no thought of children."\* We regard parenthood as the crown of a normal marriage; but, as will become more apparent in a later chapter, we shall not consent to letting it be regarded as the one excuse for marriage. Every true marriage will be founded on mutual love, which will take on an ever

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Now the truth would seem to be that while procreation is indeed one of the ends—the primary end—of marriage, it is not the whole end, procreation may even be rightly, and by no means disparagingly, described as that end of marriage which we share with the lower creation. That object, of course, may be, and often is, accomplished without anything which we should describe as "love." But no one with any experience of love worthy the name will deny that it is something immeasurably higher and finer than brute lust, nor yet that the deepest love between man and woman tends to find its supreme and most intimate expression in sex union. Such union, then, instead of being treated as a poor and disreputable relation, grudgingly and furtively admitted to a seat at the lowest end of the table, somewhere out of sight, has a right



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Marriage without love—that *summum bonum* which is never deemed worth so much as a passing reference in the Church service—is in our view quite horrible, a profanation of something sacred, yet there was never a more pernicious untruth than the doctrine that "love is enough," or that by itself it holds out more than the most precarious guarantee of any stable future happiness. A good deal more than love is

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\* Little Essays of Love and Virtue pp. 86 and 169

needed to provide a safe foundation for the rearing of so delicately poised a structure as a happy married life. We have no doubt that an Oxford undergraduate and a waitress in an Oxford café may genuinely and passionately fall in love with each other, nevertheless, if on the strength of that genuine passion they unite their destinies, one need not be a very hardened cynic to predict disaster. With the fading of the romantic glamour of courtship and honeymoon, they will discover with amazement how little they have in common—and, alas, the best endeavour will not get over the fact that their disparity is fundamental, and the things which hold them apart from each other will prove more powerful in the long run—because more permanent—than that which drew them together.

All their antecedents, inherited traits, social upbringing, ways of thought and speech, are so entirely different as to condemn them to a separateness of soul which the intimacy of marriage serves only to throw into stronger relief, nay, in that inevitable intimacy these differences will inevitably become causes of friction, and that sooner rather than later. They will know that they have made a fatal mistake, for which each will mutely or even openly assign the chief responsibility to the other, and it is not at all a case of her not being "good enough" for him—she might be good enough for a better man!—only the two of them are entirely unfitted to make a harmonious joint pilgrimage through life. Happy those who, having made a mistake of this kind, recognise it as such while it is still time to draw back, and who have the strength to part, for, as has been said by a brilliant Continental writer who still awaits an English public, Dr H Lhotzky "That two radically unsuitable people should fall head over ears in love with each other is no such misfortune—provided they do not marry."

And even apart from such an extreme instance as that which we have just presented, we would lay down the proposition that unless two people have a great deal in common, marriage between them will be a grave risk, and probably a grave blunder, however much they may appeal to one another as man and woman. The fact is that they are more than just man and woman; they are also products of particular environments, members of this or that social stratum, of this or that religious communion, trained in a particular code of conduct, accustomed to a particular mode of living. Now unless they blend in all or most of these respects, they will clash; and love, while it may cover a multitude of sins, will fail to cover such divergences as those we have just indicated.

The sincere Roman Catholic will not be happy with the equally sincere agnostic; the town-bred wife will be unequally yoked with the bluff country gentleman who always feels out of his element in the great city whose multifarious stir is to her a necessity of existence; and, in general, it may be said that to marry out of one's class, out of one's creed, out of one's generation, out of one's nationality, is to prepare for oneself—and for another—disappointment and disillusion, which love will not survive. When a middle-aged, middle-class British solicitor, like the protagonist of Mr. Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*, must needs make a Soho French restaurant keeper's pretty young daughter his wife, one need not be a very acute psychologist, versed in the mazes of the human heart, to prophesy a speedy falling asunder. Community of antecedents, similarity of general interests, an approximately equal economic and intellectual level—unless these conditions are fulfilled, marriage had better not be ventured upon, love notwithstanding. Even when young Sir Fortunatus, reared in luxury, meets the graceful, ladylike Miss Penniless, his sister's

charming governess, to the altar amid great rejoicing, the result is not likely to be what the sentimental readers of sentimental fiction like to imagine. Our theme is the Realities of Marriage; and Marriage *is* Reality.

But there is still another consideration which must enter into the "Why?"—must form part, and an important part, of the justification of any alliance that is to offer a reasonable guarantee of happiness; we mean that high moral regard and appreciation which the two intending partners ought to feel for one another. Is it too much to say that this is a feature which is all too little thought of by large numbers of prospective husbands and wives, and is it to be expected that where *this* consideration is left out of sight, the marriage should turn out other than badly?

It is not enough that a man should be supremely fascinated by a woman, or a woman feel supremely attracted by a man; unless there is that in the *character* of each which moves the other to admiration—unless they feel an unreserved assurance of each other's loyalty, honour, sense of duty, unselfishness, moral worth, a confidence born of experience—no amount of beauty, brilliance or charm will prove an adequate compensation, or stave off for long the discovery of an irreparable error, with the unavailing regrets which follow it.

It is here where the keen eye of parents, anxiously concerned for the future wellbeing of a beloved son or daughter, so often discerns flaws which love-blinded youth cannot detect; indeed, youth is apt bitterly to resent such criticisms of the beloved, and to attribute

with her " "Yes—that's just it!" How many such dialogues have been held in every age? All of us are apt to endow our idols with every possible and impossible perfection—nay, to regard any close examination of them as a sort of sacrilege, yet we would say to youth with all the emphasis at our command—*The man or woman whom you do not respect from the bottom of your heart is no fit husband or wife for you*, and since marriage has a way of lasting a long while beyond the first few weeks, marriage with such a one should be out of the question, let love protest as it may. The shimmering butterfly with no stable qualities of heart or mind, the delightful scapegrace unburdened by a moral principle, may dazzle and intoxicate as lovers, but that will not prevent them from making their wedded partners thoroughly unhappy.

If young people were half as much intent on a right appraisalment of each other's character as they are of each other's face and figure, proficiency at games or dances, and the like accomplishments, many deplorable choices would never be made. Happy is the girl who can say of her intended "I love him, yes, but above everything, I trust and respect him," happy the man who can make the corresponding declaration concerning the girl he hopes to marry.

Finally, since the normal marriage contemplates the practical certainty of children resulting from it, there is one question which every right minded man and woman must put to themselves ere deciding on so irrevocable a step "Is she the woman—is he the man—whom I shall by and by feel justified in having made the parent of my children?" If marriage were the exclusive concern of the two people about to enter into it, the matter would be a good deal simpler, for only their own fates would be involved, but as it is, the effects of their

union will reach down to the third and fourth generation. We have known, and most of our readers will have known, cases such as that of a man who, at the behest of passion and against all the warnings of reason, persisted in his determination to marry a girl whose frail loveliness, together with her family record, pointed unmistakably to the germs of consumption. Come what might, he would risk it, but in the years of agony he spent as the deadly malady developed irresistibly in his wife, in the daily haunting anxiety with which he watched the one child of his union—the image of her mother—he paid dearly for his headstrong folly. Marriage where there is a distinct predisposition to inheritable disease is, indeed, worse than folly, it is a social crime, and perhaps of all crimes the least excusable, since its victims are the hapless unborn, who are not brought but damned into the world. For our children's and children's children's sake we have the sacred duty to make sure that those who are to be their future fathers or mothers shall be certified free from transmissible physical taint. Where that condition is absent, an absolute veto has to be entered against marriage, however tearfully love may appeal against what seems a harsh decision. We shall return to this subject in Chapter IV of the present book.

And here we may bring these preliminary remarks to a close. We have tried to show both the "Why" and the equally important "Why Not" of Marriage: the indispensableness of love—and its insufficiency by itself, the need for soundness both physical and moral, on both sides, the high importance of one object—which is yet not the *only* object—of human marriage, viz., the procreation of children. The reader who has carefully perused this opening chapter, the prologue to our story, will be better qualified to follow the story itself.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE YEARS OF PREPARATION.

1.—*Childhood.*

What do we mean by beginning our exposition of the Realities of Marriage with a chapter on Childhood? Why cannot we start straight away with man and woman at the marriageable age? Might not the reader, anxious to get to the core of things without circumlocution or delay, take this chapter, and the following one on adolescence, as read?

We cannot, of course, prevent him from doing so; all the same, we would strongly urge him to curb his impatience, and give his attention to what we assure him is a most important part of our subject. For the child is, in all sober seriousness, the father of the man, the mother of the woman, that is to be; and what will be their fitness for matrimony when they reach the marriageable age, whether physically, mentally or morally considered, will depend precisely upon those years of preparation, of ripening, of outward and inward growth, at which we propose to glance.

And though those who will read these pages cannot retrace their own steps or reshape their own development, we shall be right in regarding them as prospective or actual parents, upon whom will devolve the responsibility for the development of their children. If they wish to discharge that responsibility aright, they

will here learn some fundamental things which will help them to avoid many common mistakes that are made in those years of childhood and adolescence, mistakes the full consequences of which make themselves felt too often when they are no longer remediable, viz., when their children contract marriages of their own. Not only is prevention better than cure, but a cure of ills which could or should have been prevented at the right time is in the nature of the case often impossible once that time has gone by.

For the great majority of the race, marriage is the normal and quasi inevitable goal, but a large proportion enter that state, with its tasks and problems, lamentably ill equipped, and neither in body nor in mind adapted for its manifold duties and difficulties. "Why was I not told the most vital facts about myself? Why was I allowed to injure my faculties by this or that indulgence? Why was I not tended with such reasonable care as to enable me to make the best of myself?"—such accusing questions, if they are not always put into words, are nevertheless in many people's minds and the reproach they express is too often well-founded.

It has been well and wisely said that heredity is a fact which parents should never forget, and children—so far as possible—never remember, viz., as an excuse for their own shortcomings. When a commander like Cassius pleads for allowance to be made for "that rash humour which my mother gave me," we feel that he ought to have fought down his inherited disposition to ill temper, at the same time, fathers and mothers should ponder on the qualities which they transmit to their offspring, and which will so largely shape their destinies. No truth should be more deeply realised by the parents to-be than that the supreme right of the unborn is to be well born, and when we think of lives



which have been simply a curse to the individual and the community, the issue of unfit parents, repeating the tale of unfitness in an aggravated form, the reflection must give us pause

*"I myself also am a mortal man, and in my mother's womb was fashioned to be flesh, being compacted in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that came with sleep For there is no king that had any other beginning of birth, for all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out"* So wrote the author of the Wisdom of Solomon many centuries ago, and the ancient story of parentage and birth which his words sum up is ever new and full of poignant interest What lies behind the story, and what is so seldom understood, is that the very act of generation, so often quite unintentional in kindling a new life, predetermines many characteristics of that new individual as surely as an instantaneous photograph, taken in the fraction of a second will imprint an unmistakable likeness, faithful down to the minutest details, upon the sensitive plate In conception, one out of the millions of sperm-cells discharged from the male organism, itself microscopically small, unites with the female ovum, which is the one hundred and twentieth part of an inch in diameter, yet upon these two minute specks of living matter there are traced numberless major and minor traits of the parents traits which will by and by become legible in their child, and form their finest testimonial or their most damning indictment

Among the children unhappily predestined from before their birth we must name not only those who were begotten when, e g , either parent was under the influence of alcohol and who are generally doomed to carry through life a disposition to become victims of the like failing, nor are we for the moment referring to the

offspring of the hereditarily diseased—children who should never have been born. We want to say quite frankly that any number of children are handicapped from the beginning, because that which led to their birth was *merely* sensual indulgence, in which mind and soul had little or no part. If the feeling which predominated in the parents at the moment of procreation was nothing higher than animal passion, devoid of spiritual tenderness and sympathy, will not that fact be inwrought indelibly in the structure of the unborn infant, and vitiate his character long before the symptoms come to the surface?

We have seen it stated that pious Hindu couples find it possible in the act of union to breathe forth devout sentiments and petitions to the gods to bless the life which may spring from their embrace; it should, at any rate, not be impossible for thoughtful men and women of Western race to remember in their moments of closest intimacy the solemn joy and responsibility of parentage, and to keep on the highest possible level of thought and feeling for the sake both of their own human dignity and the wellbeing of that child which they may even then be calling into life. Such as these will assuredly take to heart the poet's advice to

“ . . . arise and flee  
The reeling faun, the sensual feast;  
Strive upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die ”

The fact that parents reproduce their character, their outlook, their proclivities, in their children is one of the greatest, as it may be one of the grimmest, “realities of marriage.”

Nor is the matter ended once the fateful moment of conception is past. It is then, during the long months of pregnancy which ensue, that the mother's influence upon the developing child will be exercised, day in and

day out, in bane or blessing, to a quite incalculable extent. Out of her very thoughts, out of her changing moods, out of her self-indulgence or self-discipline, her hopes and despondencies the encouragement or discouragement given to her higher or lower emotions, she is building a human soul, which will be spirit of her spirit as much as her child's body will be flesh of her flesh. We do not say—and to this topic we shall return—that this is solely the mother's concern, on the contrary, it will be incumbent on her husband to aid her in every way—both in doing and leaving undone—so to live through that all important and necessarily trying period as to give every chance to the new life that is growing out of sight. A good father's share in the education of his child begins during the ante-natal phase and by cultivating what is best in himself and living all the time in close spiritual communion with his wife, he will to no small extent help to give the right bent to his unborn son or daughter, continually adding to the merely momentary part he had in physical procreation. The child which is the fruit of its parents' unbroken interchange of fine thinking, unwearying affection and tender sympathy—such a child will be well born.

And now, from the first moment of its separate existence, its preparation for eventual maturity and marriage must be taken in hand with conscious and consecrated purpose. Much of what the child will show itself to be in years to come has already been "bred in the bone"—many other characteristics and proclivities it will in the literal sense "drink in with the mother's milk." When we bear in mind the important part the infant's nourishment plays in transmitting and encouraging all manner of qualities in him, we shall see how hazardous it is to delegate the task of feeding

him to some stranger, of whose mind and character as a rule little is known to her employers, we shall also see how essential it is that the nursing mother should keep a very strict watch over her feelings her thoughts, her reading her amusements all of which will, through the medium of her milk colour the mentality and disposition of her child. She should "study to be quiet," avoid violent emotions keep her thoughts sweet and clean and practise those graces which she would like to reappear in her son or daughter later on but which she can directly instil into the baby at her breast.

From the earliest days the new born citizen of the world has to learn orderly physical habits and the necessity for obedience, all irregularity is injurious, morally as well as physically, and we must needs emphasise the commonplace that no one is fit to exercise authority or command who has not been taught the value of discipline. The infant who must have his own way, who has only to cry long enough and hard enough for what he fancies in order to have his wishes gratified who may stay up long after it is time for him to be in bed, and the like, will have suffered sufficient injury during the first two years of his life to make his subsequent development on desirable lines exceedingly difficult, and to predestine him for much future unhappiness. To "spoil" a child seems innocent he will soon enough come into contact with the rough side of life, we say by way of self-justification, forgetting that he will come into contact with that side of life with an unnecessarily soft skin, with an uncertain temper, and quite unjustified pretensions to preferential treatment. Incidentally, such a petted and pampered child will only too often be effectively spoilt for the give and take, the self sacrifice, the constant occasions for self restraint, which make up no small part of married life. The people who "can't

get on " with their husbands or wives have generally been wilful and uncorrected children.

Early childhood is commonly supposed to be the "sexless" period, and this is true to the extent that very young children are as a rule quite unconscious of sex-differences. "Were they little boys or little girls you were bathing with?" "I don't know, Mummy, they weren't dressed." That is a perfectly natural answer for a little child to give, and it is very desirable that this a-sexual state should be prolonged as much as possible; certainly it is a deplorable mistake, not to use a stronger term, when mere children are made aware of sex-distinctions which normally they would ignore and pass by for quite a while. Sexual precocity is always intensely unedifying; it is also a danger signal, and must be carefully watched and guarded against by parents and all to whom the care of childhood is committed. For the matter of that, it seems to be instinctively understood by most sensible persons that the aim to be kept in view is to retard, instead of accelerating, the growth of sex-consciousness in children. There is nothing more charming than to see boys and girls on the verge of adolescence, yet without a trace of embarrassment in each other's company: we forbear to say how nauseating the contrary spectacle can be, and the reflections it inspires.

But while long years elapse ere the child becomes conscious of the attractions of the opposite sex, it occurs quite frequently that very small children manifest a tendency to excite and gratify what are—though, of course, they do not suspect it—distinctly sexual feelings in themselves, by playing with, touching, or rubbing their genital organs either with the hands, or against their clothes or the bed-linen, or by merely rubbing their thighs together. The utmost care must be taken lest

this pernicious habit be set up, for if once established it will be difficult to shake off, and prove the cause of every kind of physical and moral mischief. A mere mite of no more than a year old may be seen sitting with its legs tightly crossed and keeping up a queer rocking motion mother or nurse looking on the while without a suspicion in their minds as to what is really happening. Much as we shrink from stating so painful a truth, the infant is practising masturbation (self abuse) and unless checked may become addicted to a vicious habit which will insidiously but surely weaken its body, stain its mind and deprave its morals. Occasionally a nursemaid, having discovered that the baby can be kept quiet by being "played with," sows the evil seeds of future sexual irritability and ungovernable desire, where this is so much as reasonably suspected, instant dismissal of the offender should follow.

How quickly the evil effects of infantile masturbation show themselves let the following instance, related by Sir Richard Quain, illustrate. A tiny boy of three, feeble and sickly was brought to his consulting room by his mother, and as soon as he was undressed, his hands moved to his genital organs. The mother, who treated the subject as of no particular importance, was greatly surprised to learn from the great physician that in this habit lay the cause of the boy's feeble physique. Such a child of either sex may become even physically unfit for marriage, with weakened body and polluted imagination.

With a view to the retardation of sexual feeling in children, they should be sensibly dressed, care being taken to avoid tight clothing, which is apt to rub or chafe against the genital parts. "It is wise," says Mrs. Goslett, in her *Hints for Mothers on the Home Sex Training for Boys*, "to postpone the wearing of breeches as long as possible, and when pockets are

allowed they should be very shallow ones, while the habit of putting hands in breeches pockets should be treated as bad manners and forbidden from the beginning." Girls' clothing, too, should be loose enough to permit of freedom of movement and deep breathing, while nothing must be done that will hinder the future development of the breasts.

It is still necessary at this time of day to insist that the plainest of nourishing food is the only kind that should be given to children in order to promote their healthy growth. Meat should be only sparingly partaken of, and may be largely dispensed with, while cereals, vegetables and fruit should predominate in the composition of a child's régime, give him plenty of fresh fruit, and he will ail little, the system being constantly cleansed and freshened by the valuable juices. What is known as a liberal meat diet will directly stimulate sex proclivities and is thus to be held *taboo*, and the same applies to all rich or highly seasoned foods to the consumption of fancy cakes, and a habitual indulgence in sweets. Children require sugar, but this is best administered in the form of fruit. Chocolate is no doubt a valuable food, but the plain kind is alone to be recommended for youngsters, and that not in excess.

The proper beverages for quenching a child's thirst are water and milk, tea and coffee are stimulants and should, if given at all to young boys and girls, be served to them only in a diluted form. As for alcohol in any shape or form the sooner we realise that it is simply poison for children's nerves and digestion, and that its administration to them is a piece of downright wickedness and folly, the better will it be for the coming generation. The close connection between alcoholic indulgence and the excitation of sexual desire is notorious, and unless we wish to arouse those desires prematurely in our children we shall not dream of

allowing them to partake of what is, for them at any rate, a certain source of danger, possibly of disaster

Plain, wholesome food and drink, sensible, "roomy" clothes, plenty of outdoor life and outdoor games, an avoidance of amusements which will unduly stimulate the imagination, such as cinema films, which introduce millions of juvenile intellects far too early to many unlovely aspects of life—given an observance of these not too onerous conditions, the children will have at least a chance of growing up in fitness of body and mind for their eventual lot of marriage and parenthood. In general terms, but very earnestly, we would plead for a return to greater simplicity in the bringing up of children, those of an earlier generation were no less happy, and spent a no less enjoyable youth, because their toys were more primitive, their amusements fewer, and their pleasure less constantly and consciously catered for—on the other hand they grew up with sounder nerves and more wear-resisting constitutions while that abomination, the *blasé* child, was happily unknown

Two more subjects will claim our attention before we bring the present chapter to a close. With the first of these we wish to deal, not at all dogmatically but rather tentatively, since it is nothing less than the place of suggestion in the training of the child during the "years of preparation." Our readers will probably be aware that what is known as the new psychology attributes much more importance to man's Unconscious Mind than the older types of that science, which concentrated attention exclusively upon conscious mental states. It is now held by a growing school of psychologists that the best—indeed, the only really effective—way of exercising influence upon a human being is to appeal to his unconscious mind, upon that element



which is more accessible to suggestion than his conscious will or his conscious reason, it is the unconscious mind which must be influenced if we seek to give a particular bent to anyone's nature, action, thought or feelings, for the unconscious mind is that which moulds our destinies.

Now if this is true—and those who have studied the methods followed by M. Coué strongly affirm it to be so—we can see that we have here placed into our hands a most potent instrument in shaping the character of childhood. M. Coué, as represented by his English disciple, Mr. Harry C. Brooks, recommends that the mother should stand by the bedside of her little son or daughter, taking care not to arouse them from their slumbers and whisper to them such suggestions, regarding either physical wellbeing or rules of conduct, as she may deem necessary. "If the child is ailing, the suggestion might take the form of the phrase, 'You are getting better,' repeated twenty times. Particular suggestions may also be formulated bearing on the child's health, character, intellectual development etc.

On withdrawing, the mother should again be careful not to awaken the little one. Should it show signs of waking, the whispered command 'Sleep,' repeated several times, will lull it again to rest." In every case the suggestion must take the form, not of expressing a wish that a certain improvement should occur, but of a positive statement to the effect that it is already taking place, that the change for the better has begun and is going to continue.

We may readily admit that this method of exerting influence by means of suggestions addressed to the unconscious mind is still in the experimental stage, and that we are merely on the outskirts of a great subject, but already the volume of evidence of results achieved by that procedure is very considerable, and the effects stated to have been produced both upon the bodily

health and the moral development of children are so remarkable as to warrant our reference to the subject in this place. Those who desire to pursue this fascinating topic are advised to read Mr. Brooks' little volume, *The Practice of Auto Suggestion*, which is written in delightfully untechnical language, though often, where the author uses that term we should speak of suggestion simply.

But we have still to deal with the most important, as it is, alas, the most neglected, of the tasks incumbent on parents during their children's early years. It is the task of imparting to them knowledge which in the course of nature they cannot but acquire, nay, which they ought to acquire, but which as a rule comes to them in a thoroughly undesirable and even pernicious manner, as an unclean and guilty secret, and because it is so regarded from the first, it is too often hugged and hoarded and discussed with unwholesome glee and eagerness.

Each generation has itself to thank if the next looks upon sex as an impure thing, which is yet invested with all the glamour which attaches to the forbidden. Is it not worth some effort to keep this stream—the very stream of life—fresh and pure and sweet, so that youth may not derive what should be high and holy knowledge through polluted and polluting channels? Can we not see to it that those who as they will bear life's burden, should share life's glory, nay, learn all that they need to know concerning the facts of life, freely, honestly, reverently, without defiling and degrading associations?

The normal child is not many years old before the question begins to present itself to his or her mind, "I was not always here—whence came I?" A new baby has been welcomed into the family circle—where did it come from? Such questionings are as legitimate as

they are inevitable, and should be recognised as such from the start. We do not contend that they should be answered at once, or fully; on the other hand, the inquiring child should never be snubbed, and never be put off with a convenient fiction. To meet inquiry with a snub is to sow the first seeds of a suspicion that the truth will not bear avowal; as for the nursery fables concerning the baby's arrival, they never impose upon the youngster—he knows by an instinct deeper than reasoning that the story he is told is only a grown-up evasion, and mentally registers a determination to find out the truth which is being kept from him.

A young child might be told, in the kindest, most unembarrassed manner, that he would not understand yet, but that by and by, before very long, his question will be answered. It should be impressed on him even then that these are matters not to be talked about to strangers, but that he will learn all he wants to know from his own parents. It is essential that all this should be said in a tone free from all constraint—that the young questioner should not be given the impression that there is anything to be *ashamed* of in connection with the subject. The first and simplest and greatest truth which may be communicated to mere mites, viz., that the baby brother or sister is God's gift, a present sent by Him, and that he himself was once so sent, will satisfy a child's mind far better than any of the fictions with which such inquiries are usually met.

But a time comes—it may be when the child is seven or eight years old, perhaps even earlier—when a further step may be taken. He may then be told that a baby is at first so weak and helpless that it has to be kept in a very safe place for growth and protection, and that place is in the mother's own body, near her heart, there to be sheltered till it is strong enough to come forth. There is nothing in such information that will shock the

most sensitive little mortal, or strike him as other than in accordance with the fitness of things. That, before he was laid in his cradle as an infant, his own mother cradled him, kept him safe and warm, will make him look upon her with all the greater affection, and so his first introduction to the physiological side of the subject—to what he will later learn to know as pregnancy—will have pure and hallowed associations. Let the right hour be chosen for this initiation: let the child feel that he is receiving a very sacred confidence, which must under no circumstances be talked about to outsiders. The child will prize the confidence as such, and respond to the appeal to his honour, he will now know better why he and his mother are so much to each other, especially if he has learnt that for months she nourished him with her own life, and perhaps risked that life in giving life to him.

We would very strongly urge the view that all the principal facts of the subject should be made known, not when the child reaches adolescence, but before that important stage is reached, i.e., before the awakening of those new instincts and urgencies which mark the transition from childhood to maturity. If boys and girls are equipped with a general knowledge of their respective bodily structure and functions ere they reach that critical threshold they will cross it safely and naturally: to wait till the outward and inward signs of approaching manhood or womanhood manifest themselves is a serious blunder.

Of course it is possible only to tell so much at a time. But both girls and boys should be made acquainted, simply and candidly, with the nature of the organs which serve the great end of bringing new life into the world. Such knowledge is now happily available at small cost in excellent handbooks, and in popular language, such as those to which we draw attention at

the close of the present chapter. If children are so enlightened, then, when the sex-instinct awakens, they will know it for the *life*-instinct, a new and wonderful power confided to them for future use, when the time for such use shall come, i.e., in the holy and happy bonds of love sanctioned by marriage, marriage sanctioned by love. They will know sufficient of the marvels of their respective organisms, and the knowledge, though necessarily private, as all the most intimate things are private, will be unaccompanied by false shame or false modesty.

As we saw already, the truth concerning the mother's physical relation to her child, the facts concerning its growth in the shelter of her body, may be told to a very young girl or boy with total inoffensiveness by the mother herself, and in such a manner as to deepen mutual affection. With so much disclosed at quite an early age she will have no difficulty in telling her daughter little by little more about her bodily structure and the parts played by the various organs that serve reproduction. But with regard to her little boy, too—in those intimacies of every day from which the father is more or less excluded, i.e., in bathing and otherwise attending to his body—the mother will have the opportunity of giving him at an early age some hints as to the importance and care of those organs which will in time fit him for the high destiny of fatherhood. She will instruct him regarding the necessity of keeping those organs absolutely clean while he is still very little, and she can warn him affectionately against beginning those bad habits, previously spoken of, which are so terribly difficult to shake off later on.

One might greatly enlarge on this theme, but for considerations of space. Let us, however, quote the words of Dr. F. Arthur Sibley, who speaks as a teacher of many years' standing, and who sums up much wisdom in the following remarks: "In every instance

the cleanliness of a boy's life depends ultimately not on his knowledge of good and evil, but on his devotion to the right. Without it, purity teaching is worse than useless. *Inspire in his heart a passion for high ideals, and things known to be evil will find no lodgment there.*" Instruction must be blended with inspiration, arousing a love of goodness and a deep aversion from the hidden things of shame.

That is the best service we can render to the growing child: so to enlighten his mind as at the same time to appeal to his heart and innate sense of honour. An appeal so addressed will never miss its aim, and by imparting vital knowledge in such a spirit, we shall both show youth that respect which is its due and lay the foundation of that most precious possession, chastity. And by chastity we do not mean the mental attitude characteristic of monasticism and some forms of Puritanism, which regards sex as the devil's bait, specially designed for man's undoing; we mean that much nobler thing, healthy-mindedness, which accepts all the faculties of our nature as good and wholesome, scorning to abuse any of them, but which may be trusted to put each one—and none more than the endowment of sex

## CHAPTER III.

## THE YEARS OF PREPARATION.

II.—*Adolescence.*

In the previous chapter we have had occasion to point out that most normal children, long before they reach the threshold of manhood or womanhood, exhibit a more or less marked and persistent interest in the mystery surrounding the subject of birth. Not only is this no mere idle curiosity on their part, but it springs from an intuition of the importance of this subject, and is, as it were, an intimation of the dawning consciousness which will one day give to the facts of sex that unique importance which they possess for all vital and healthy individuals.

But before that day appears a most significant border-line has to be crossed, the border-line dividing childhood from adolescence. Adolescence is a period fraught with such decisive issues for either sex that we must needs devote a chapter to a discussion of its phenomena, its problems, and its dangers; for it is during these years that the preparation for marriage proceeds at a quickened and intensified pace, a preparation in which body and soul partake in equal measure. We shall deal with these manifestations, first, in relation to the boy about to become a man; next, in relation to the girl about to become a woman.

## I.

About the fourteenth or fifteenth year of the average boy's life certain changes, both external and internal, and in both respects far-reaching, begin to manifest themselves. A growth of hair appears in the armpits.

in the region of the genital organs, and in a lesser degree on the face, the larynx is enlarged, the result being that "breaking" of the voice which is characteristic of this age of transition, bones and muscles develop unmistakably, and the testicles—the two egg-shaped bodies contained in the scrotum—grow materially larger, because they commence to discharge their characteristic function, the formation of those millions of seminal cells or sperms, every one of which is capable of fertilising a female ovum. This process of development continues several years before it is completed, and the stage of manhood is reached.

At the onset of puberty, too, the male organ of intercourse acquires the capacity for enlargement and erection under the influence of sexual excitement. This, of course, is necessary for the purpose of discharging the semen into the female organ, but it is also a source of some discomfort to the adolescent, in whose case the appeasement of sexual desire is of course, out of the question.

The formation and secretion of sperm cells goes on continuously—and is often prolonged to old age—in the male organism, and when the vessels in which the cells are stored become surcharged, the fluid so secreted will naturally seek an outlet. As a rule—i.e., where the boy has not succumbed to the temptation of solitary indulgence—that outlet will be found in involuntary nocturnal emissions, and it is generally held that the first such emission marks with a sharp decisiveness the arrival of puberty in the growing youth, puberty being, however, something far removed as yet from full sexual maturity, a point which is frequently forgotten. This overflow, the automatic ejaculation of the semen, takes place during sleep, and is as a rule accompanied by dreams of a definitely or indefinitely erotic character, and it may well happen that the youth—generally un-



prepared for such an occurrence—suffers a real psychic shock or disturbance when this thing first happens to him. The greater his general sensitiveness and purity, the more is he likely to feel a discomfort amounting to actual distress, he may even imagine himself to be suffering from some dire disease—in any case his balance will for the time being be badly shaken.

Let it, then, be said with the utmost plainness that these emissions are a normal and not an abnormal or morbid phenomenon, constituting nature's method of relieving a state of congestion or distension which, if unrelieved, would rapidly grow intolerable; and let it, above all, be distinctly understood that this periodic overflow, as it is not to be dreaded or regarded with feelings of false shame, so it is not to be interpreted as a sign that sexual intercourse should be resorted to, or has become a "necessity." Individuals differ widely as regards the quantity of sperm-cells they form within a given time, or the rapidity with which their vessels fill so as to necessitate an overflow, but unless emissions occur oftener than at intervals of from ten days to a fortnight, they need cause no anxiety. A feeling of lassitude may be experienced on the day following such an involuntary evacuation, but even this should not occasion any alarm, as nature will speedily readjust the balance.

But in addition to this formation and secretion of male sperm-cells—to which, as we shall see, there corresponds in the female organism the formation and secretion of eggs waiting to be fertilised—the sexual glands, and not these alone, begin at the age of puberty to produce certain highly important inner secretions, having functions which are only just beginning to be appreciated by science. To use the exact language of an authority like Havelock Ellis, "in recent years the glandular system, and especially that of the ductless

glands, has taken on an altogether new significance. These ductless glands, as we know, liberate into the blood what are termed 'hormones,' or chemical messengers, which have a complex but precise action in exciting and developing all those physical and psychic activities which make up a full life alike on the general side and the reproductive side, so that their balanced functions are essential to wholesome and complete existence." It is these internal secretions "always at work within and never condescending to appear at all," which determine the sexual nature of each individual, and which serve in no small manner to awaken the instinct and the needs of sex.

Thus then we see the youthful organism being transformed, undergoing new stimuli, becoming aware of new wants, new attractions, new elements within seeking liberation, a whole new world as yet dimly apprehended, but calling out to be visited and conquered. The child of yesterday has become the adolescent of to day, and sex—however much we may desire to delay the symptoms we have briefly described—is beginning to assert its sway over him.

What is to be our attitude in the face of this transformation which comes to pass? It would be futile to try and ignore—still more so to try and exterminate—this uprush of new faculty and accompanying desire which proceeds from the inmost foci of our being, our task is to guide it wisely and safely, so that it may not work devastation and disaster.

Let it be recognised in the first instance that under the conditions of town life—especially life in large towns—the instinct of sex is almost certain to be roused at an earlier age and stimulated in an intenser degree than is the case in what remains of the country. Pictures, entertainments "comic" and other papers, alluring theatrical or cinematograph performances, seductive

posters, shop windows exhibiting half clad models, all these will be liable to make a powerful, awakening appeal to the growing boy's imagination, and, short of internment, we see no means of withdrawing him from this whole atmosphere. Here comes in the importance of that early instruction in the facts of life for which we pleaded a few pages back, an instruction which should always emphasise the essential sacredness of life and the life transmitting power, and should aim to implant in the boy's mind a chivalrous reverence for all women, as the sex on whom nature has laid so much heavier a burden than on men.

We believe that the boy who has been fortunate enough to receive such teaching will be proof against the baser seductiveness too often associated with the topic of sex. Not that he will view sex itself with distaste, nor is it to be desired that he should do so; but he will have nothing but distaste for base, lascivious talk, for indecent jests, and for all that tends to steep in filth what he has learned to regard as holy and noble. After all the effect of the things without depends on what they find within to welcome or to repel them. The boy who has been "started right" in relation to sex-matters will be proof against many of the snares and lures that lie in wait for him, some of them will simply fail to rouse his appetite, while from others he will turn away of his own accord in healthy disgust. That is not to say that we can ever afford to be careless as regards the kinds of amusement we allow the adolescent boy to frequent, the kind of friends we permit him to associate with, the books and papers we shall suffer to form his mental pabulum, on the contrary, all these will require constant and affectionate watchfulness, but the main thing is that he should have received a measure of wise and sympathetic enlightenment before entering on the period of transition.

The youth, we say, having crossed the threshold of puberty, finds himself assailed by new, strange longings, which—unless carefully held in check—may prove imperious, even tyrannous, demanding instant satisfaction in one way or another. The internal secretions of which we spoke, colour and shape his mind, and the sperm cells which are being continuously formed and secreted in the testicles produce a tension, a physical and emotional unrest, a rising flood which asks to be liberated. Is it not natural to argue that so powerful an instinct is its own justification, and that the adolescent has a right to yield to its importunities? Must it not be injurious to refuse its appointed outlet to this as to other natural excretions—is not such a refusal tantamount to a poisoning of the system? Such arguments are eagerly welcomed by those in search of a plausible reason for indulgence, they are nevertheless gravely erroneous, and the supposed necessity for the satisfaction of the sex-instinct as soon as it arises is altogether imaginary.

For, to begin with, the apparent parallel between the seminal flow and other bodily excretions is utterly fallacious. The latter consist of waste products of the body, and unless they are eliminated from it, they will indeed act as poisons, whereas the sperm-cells, so far from being "waste," constitute the quintessence of the body's powers and faculties, and can to a relatively large extent be re absorbed into the body, with results entirely advantageous. *Sexual continence during the years of adolescence is an almost indispensable condition for the development of the highest physical, mental and moral excellence*, and even after full maturity has been reached, *i.e.*, in the early twenties, any special effort of body or mind will almost certainly necessitate a period of abstinence from sexual intercourse.

Secondly, the strength with which sex-needs make themselves felt during that epoch—and indeed throughout life—will depend to a very considerable extent upon the manner of life the youth or man chooses to live, i.e., the inner as well as the outer life, that of the mind as well as that of the body. If he encourages thoughts of indulgence by his conversation, reading, amusements, such thoughts will in course of time become his habitual companions, arising spontaneously, refusing to be dismissed, and finally taking the form of obsessions; they will thus continually stimulate the production of those very sperm-cells which in turn cry out to be liberated. What is far too little realised is that we are able, at will, appreciably to reduce the production of sperm-cells by the sole expedient of directing our habitual thoughts to other subjects, by working a little harder at our tasks, by acquiring some new skill or aptitude, by engaging in some form of strenuous activity, by deliberately investing our margin of energy in some enterprise removed from the region of sex and its besetments. This is not to ill-treat the body by denying it what it demands; it is to give body, mind and spirit the best chance of developing harmoniously and becoming fit for the finest achievements each is capable of.\*

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\*In the words of Prof Gruber, "Not only the stimulations of the sexual apparatus, but inhibitions also of the reflex process of erection, proceed from the brain. These inhibitions frequently occur spontaneously, even involuntarily. Thus, e.g., it is well known that fright, pain, or some other vehement sensation, the emergence of some vivid idea which deflects attention from desire, may quite suddenly extinguish the latter, and cause erection to subside. Strenuous intellectual occupation, as a rule, serves to silence from the outset the tumult proceeding from the sexual centres. We are able to call up of our own accord and deliberately such ideas as will inhibit sexual excitement, e.g., the idea of duty or of the risks which gratification will incur. He alone is free and master of himself who has learned to use the inhibitory faculties which his brain places at his disposal. This capacity of inhibition is characteristic of the civilised being, as distinct from him who is the slave of the moment's mood."

While on this subject, let us emphasise what cannot be too often said, viz, that he who looks even to marriage as a *field for the unrestrained indulgence* of his sexual appetite is certain to meet with woeful disappointment and much unhappiness, and the youth who has not, in the years between puberty and marriage, trained himself in the fine art of continence, will have occasion bitterly and unavailingly to regret a fatal gap in his equipment during those periods of married life when a strict continence must be practised.

On the other hand, the young man who has learned betimes to subject body and mind—or perhaps we should say his mind, and therefore his body—to a healthful discipline by turning away from sensual imaginings, and who has achieved self restraint by devoting his thoughts and his energies to other than sexual ends, will reap his reward when the time comes for him to enter the promised land of marriage. His faculties and his character will be unblunted and unsullied by premature indulgence, his energies will have been sublimated by the course he has followed, and what might have been crude animal passion will have been touched with chivalry, tenderness and idealism, he will know, above all, to give his wife those seasons of respite from conjugal relations by the refusal of which so many women grow old and suffering before their time, as every family physician can sorrowfully attest.

In sum, then, we hold, and would state very emphatically, that continence during the adolescent phase is neither impossible nor injurious, but both practicable and helpful. In saying this, we do not for one moment suggest that such continence does not involve a struggle, with some incidental hardship—neither, for reasons which will appear, do we pretend that such restraint is as easy for men as for women, indeed, the contention, often somewhat lightly and indeed callously put

forward, that this self-mastery is an easy matter, is responsible for much harm, disillusion and many a fall that might have been avoided. We would rather say to the young man "Your task is an arduous one, but its accomplishment is not beyond your strength, and it is quite enormously worth your while to wage this battle with unremitting perseverance. And if at times you find it hard to buffet your body and bring it into subjection, have the grace to remember that nature imposes a far harder burden upon woman, and the manliness to bear your lighter one without shirking or backsliding. For your own sake, still more for your future wife's and children's sake, you ought to act in this way, and *you can because you ought*."

## II

As the growing girl in normal health enters her teens a number of changes, both external and internal, mental as well as physical, begin to come over her, corresponding to those we have noted in the boy, changes which transform her from a child into a maiden. Her contours become unmistakably feminine, her breasts enlarge she grows broader in the hips, and hair begins to appear in the armpits and the region of the genital organs, which latter, too, show distinct development. Indefinably she becomes aware that she is no longer the same, inwardly as well as outwardly new characteristics appear, among others a new consciousness of the fact of sex, manifesting itself in the form either of attraction or repulsion. In either case, *i.e.*, whether attracted or repelled by persons of the opposite sex the reason, though she may not realise it, is that she has for the first time instinctively discerned the deepest of all differences the difference between man and woman.

But the greatest and most vitally important of the

changes which take place in her at that critical age—as a rule at about fourteen to fifteen in our climate, much earlier in the tropics, and as late as eighteen in Lapland—is that she now begins to ripen and secrete eggs, on an average one a month, from the ovaries, i.e., she becomes capable of motherhood. What happens is that every four weeks or so an egg or ovum bursts the tiny envelope (follicle) in which it is enclosed, and in due course reaches the uterus (womb) by way of the Fallopian tubes, either to be fertilised by a male sperm-cell or, if no such process of fertilisation takes place, to pass out of the system through the vagina. This process of “*ovulation*” as it is called coincides with the monthly phenomenon of *menstruation*, the secretion from the female genitals of a quantity of healthy blood mingled with mucus from the uterus. The phenomenon marks the advent of puberty as sharply in the girl as, say, the first involuntary discharge of semen marks the same stage in the boy; but, unlike the latter, it gives rise to no erotic ideas or sensations—indeed, it occasions at best some degree of discomfort, but more frequently is accompanied by pain and a general “out-of-sortness.”

Whether there is any necessary causal nexus between ovulation and menstruation is a hotly-debated question on which authority is ranged against authority and opinion against opinion; but this is a problem which need hardly engage the attention of those who, like the majority of the readers of this book, are chiefly interested in facts rather than theories.

It is occasionally surmised that menstruation is merely the result of “ages of unhealthy living”; the sufficient answer to this contention seems to be the fact that this monthly secretion is met with even among the most primitive human tribes, though its painful and burdensome character grows more marked with the rise of civilisation and more or less artificial and sophisticated



ways of living. Among women belonging to savage or hardy communities it is unaccompanied by any of the distressing symptoms so common among their more civilised sisters. Among the latter, language has fixed the nature of the occurrence—they are “unwell” once a month, with slighter or severer feelings of abdominal pain, lassitude, loss of voice and appetite, tenderness in the breasts, etc., etc. Indeed, as Dr. Andrew Wilson says, “menstruation is a function which means so much to the life of a girl”—and for the matter of that, of a woman—“that almost every organ of the body is affected by its onset;” and it has been computed that in perhaps sixty per cent. of women this originally purely physiological function assumes a pathological complexion.

Given normal health, however, there should be nothing more than a certain loss of “tone,” with no more discomfort than is compatible with the discharge of all ordinary duties. The flow should last no longer than from four to five days, though in highly-strung, nervous subjects it is frequently prolonged beyond that limit. It may be observed that some time often elapses before the period recurs regularly after its first appearance; it may take a year or even more before menstruation becomes thoroughly established as the monthly function of the adolescent girl, and while ideally it ought to be exactly calculable as occurring at intervals of twenty-eight days, such perfect regularity is perhaps the exception rather than the rule.

One thing seems to us so plain that it ought not to require being said, did not sad experience prove the contrary: to allow a girl to approach this critical stage in her development without carefully preparing her for what is about to happen, is nothing less than cruelty, and may in effect be a crime against her. That such an omission is often due to a miscalled delicacy rather

than to mere thoughtlessness does not make it any better. We hold that long before puberty looms imminent a girl ought to have received such loving and careful enlightenment concerning her physical structure, with special regard to the organs of procreation, as will have made her mentally and morally ready to partake of this particular piece of important information. She ought to be told that this phenomenon which, if unexplained, may scare her very badly, is nothing to be frightened of. She ought to be told that it is a sign that she is entering on a new stage of life, and being endowed with powers which will enable her by and by to realise every true woman's dearest wish—the wish for a child of her own. She ought at the same time to have it impressed upon her how holy and precious is this faculty, and how jealously to be safeguarded against any misuse, and simultaneously she ought to learn the best means for minimising the discomforts incidental to this monthly visitation.

If any mother has so forgotten her own girlhood as to require to have her sense of duty in this respect stimulated we would ask her to read so essentially truthful a book as Miss May Sinclair's *Mary Olivier*, where the distinguished novelist briefly but poignantly describes the anguish of her heroine, who is permitted to reach adolescence with all its physical and psychic disturbance, without a single hint of what she has to expect. The present writer could cite case after case of girls whose elders seemed to make it their aim to leave them in the densest possible ignorance on all matters affecting sex, and who would have entered marriage in almost complete ignorance of what it implies on the physical side, but for the opportune reading of some clean but plain spoken handbook.

But while, as we have seen, nature bears hardly on women in imposing upon them this monthly trial, it may

be pointed out that on the other hand they receive at any rate a negative compensation in being immune from those strong sexual desires which play so large, and often so disastrous, a part in the life of adolescent manhood. The girl who has left childhood behind her does, of course, grow personally aware of the fact of sex-attraction and becomes liable to form romantic attachments, but she is spared those fierce besetments of crude, unruly passion which torment most young men and have to be wrestled against if they are to be successfully subdued. There is in woman's organism no such continually rising flood seeking liberation as in man's, and hence, while not at all lacking in a capacity for strong sexual feeling, once that feeling has been aroused from without, the single girl or woman as a rule has no experience of an impetus corresponding to man's arousing that feeling from within. Continence, which involves a struggle for the unmarried man, comes natural to the unmarried woman, nature's happy gift to her otherwise much tried daughter, and without for one moment defending what is known as the double standard of morality for the sexes, we can see that common opinion is not wrong in judging more severely of woman's failure than of man's in regard to chastity.

A good deal of very deleterious nonsense has been uttered on this subject by the self appointed advocates of a misunderstood "purity" painting men as monsters of animalism compared with the saintliness of women to all of which the answer may be given in the poet's line, "*Ye know not what's resisted*". Nature has her own object to serve in endowing one sex with far greater sexual initiative than the other, and it is in any case no use quarrelling with her decrees but it is possible—we shall not dogmatise on the subject—that, had some strongly sexed men the alternative, they might choose a limited period of "unwellness" every month in prefer-

ence to a perpetual unsatisfied desire, a wearing warfare without release, such as some men, and by no means the worst men, know.

It remains that in bringing this chapter to a close we should lay down certain simple hygienic rules to be observed during the monthly period, rules which should be put into practice from the first dawn of puberty, and which will thus become second nature during the whole span of years which will elapse before the menopause—the gradual cessation of the menstrual flow—sets in, viz., roughly, in the middle forties of a woman's life.

Without "coddling" herself, or looking upon her condition as that of an invalid, a girl should be taught that all vehement exertion, such as is involved in sport, riding, dancing, etc., is the reverse of helpful, and must be suspended or reduced to a minimum, from the first to the last stage of the period. There is a time for all things, and that particular portion of the month is most certainly *not* the time for a walking tour, a climbing expedition or for taking part in a hockey match; and the girl who—again, most frequently from a false delicacy, and because she does not like anyone to guess that she is not well—will impose such an additional strain upon her organism when it is already more than usually taxed, may be preparing serious ill-health and suffering for herself. She may, and should, indulge in gentle exercise, but not in exhausting cycle rides or hours of tennis; and if a feeling of languor and listlessness calls for rest—even for the temporary suspension of everyday duties in the home or at school—it is folly to disregard these promptings and try to "carry on" as usual.

Particular care should be taken to avoid colds at a time when the most delicate organs of the body are in a somewhat inflamed state, owing to their congestion

with blood. There are instances on record where, e.g. sleeping in damp sheets while menstruation was in progress, brought on life-long lamentable results, of which permanent sterility was only one. River or sea bathing is, of course, out of the question while a girl is unwell.

Where menstruation is accompanied by severe pain a day or even more spent in bed will be imperatively needed; hot abdominal compresses or hip-baths will often give relief, but the deceptive soothing effects of alcohol in any shape or form are to be avoided. Treatment by drugs is to be resorted to only if all milder measures fail, and then only on skilled and responsible advice.

While the period is in progress the food partaken of should be nourishing, but easily digestible, and neither rich nor stimulating; as regards beverages, tea or coffee should be taken only sparingly, especially by nervous subjects, while alcoholic drinks, as already stated, should be absolutely *taboo*. The object aimed at in the diet should be to cool, not further to heat, the blood.

Almost all women are liable at these times to fits of depression and irritability, and stand in need of especially gentle and considerate treatment; an understanding mother or husband will readily condone some minor lapse of temper due to merely physical causes and make, where necessary, the soft answer which turneth away wrath. On the other hand the girl or woman should know that she requires to exercise double portion of self-control while she is unwell, and not allow herself to be betrayed into peevishness or bursts of unreasonable temper. It is nearly always well to make allowances for another; it is nearly always a error to make allowances for oneself. Anything in the nature of excitement, extra strain, heavy demands on brain or nerves, is to be avoided during what is already

a disturbed phase in a woman's cycle, and it will be elementary wisdom to keep the emotional side of her nature as quiescent as possible, just because on that side she is particularly vulnerable. We are certain that if these rules were observed, girls and women would be spared an enormous portion of the sheer wretchedness which makes so many of them look forward to each period with an anguished apprehension of sufferings, bodily and mental.

But the principal rule of all is that which we have left to the last, and it is comprehended in the one word, Cleanliness, scrupulous cleanliness. As a matter of course there should be at least one warm bath every week, by which we mean a thorough cleansing of the pores, with abundant application of soap and vigorous "scrubbing." The breasts require special care, and should receive daily ablutions with cold water, which will serve to promote their healthy development and enable them to fulfil their future function, especially if no injury is done to these important organs by the folly of tight-fitting corsets, which are the source of untold ill and directly responsible for any amount of painful menstruation. But, above all, the outer genitals ought to be washed every day—preferably twice a day—with cold or lukewarm water and some non-irritant soap. The omission of this simple hygienic measure is at the root of numberless troubles that afflict womankind, and a moment's reflection should suffice to make it clear that such delicate portions of the anatomy must be preserved from all impurity. It goes without saying that the need of this scrupulous cleanliness—which should be dictated by mere æsthetic considerations—becomes doubly urgent during the monthly period, and that the wearing and frequent change of absorbent sanitary towels is absolutely indispensable. It is pleasant to read in Continental handbooks that in all

these respects women of British race lead the way; but even in this country we are still very far from attainable perfection.

Let the adolescent girl be instructed and trained in hygienic habits from the outset, so that the routine to be observed becomes a self-understood thing; she will thus be saved much weakening pain, and by treating her body with intelligent respect she will prepare herself for that vocation to which she naturally aspires—the vocation of a happy wife and mother.

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The reader is further referred to the following books —

"Youth and Maidenhood," by Walter M Gallichan, Chapters V,—VIII

"Womanhood" by Mona Baird, Book II, "The Young Woman"

"Manhood" by Charles Thompson, especially Chapter VII, "Self Control,"

"Love's Coming of Age," by Edward Carpenter

"What a Young Girl Should Know," by Mary Wood Allen

"Sexual Physiology," by R T Trall M D, Chapter V, "The Physiology of Menstruation"

## CHAPTER IV

## MARRIAGE AND HEALTH

Let us begin this chapter with a fable

One day King Jove, the Chief of the Immortals, gave a grand reception, to which all the divinities major and minor, were invited. It was the biggest crowd that had ever been seen on Olympus, and Ganymede, at the head of a trained waiting staff, was hard put to it to attend to the wants of all the guests in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. Yes, it was quite a crush, and owing to the record number of divinities present, it happened that some of them did not even know each other—some did, but were not on speaking terms. Of course there were bosom friends and close associates among the crowd, anybody could tell, for instance, that a dissolute looking youth, whose name was Bacchus—the god of drunkenness—was an intimate associate of Venus, who by common consent was “no better than she should be,” nor even quite a good. On the other hand there was a remarkable case of a tall, handsome god and a noble and beautiful goddess, who were obviously strangers to each other. “Who is she?” the god asked of a knot of his colleagues. “Don’t you know?” they said, and smiled. “Who is he?” asked the goddess of her lady friends. “Don’t you know?” they said, and were highly amused. At last Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, got hold of them and effected a long overdue introduction. “This,” she said in her rich clear voice, “is HYMEN, the god of marriage, and this is HYGIEIA, the goddess of health



You two ought to be better acquainted with one another." And with a look full of intelligent goodwill she withdrew, leaving the two strangers to become friends.

It is an edifying apologue, and we wish that it embodied an achievement rather than an as yet unfulfilled aspiration. But truthfulness compels us to say that considerations of health, which ought to be among the chief to enter into the question of marriage between any two individuals, are still too commonly slighted, with the most deplorable consequences, making many a wedding feast, outwardly a scene of merriment and rejoicing, the first act of a tragedy which will, so far from building up happy lives, lay the fair fabric of life in ruins. Until it is realised that a sound constitution in the prospective partners is a far more fundamental condition of happiness than good looks, or social position, or ample means, these tragedies will continue to be enacted. Men and women will marry in flagrant disregard of signs and tokens which ought to tell them that this way danger and disaster lies, that by persisting in this particular choice they will almost beyond a peradventure prepare wretchedness for themselves and each other, and an utterly unmerited heritage of wretchedness for their unborn offspring. What medical man cannot tell of cases where his earnest warnings were flouted, and where, powerless to prevent the evil he could not but foresee, he was compelled to witness how year by year his prophecies, lightly spurned by obstinate or infatuated youth, verified themselves to the letter? That in a world where there is much unavoidable suffering and unhappiness, men and women should persist in incurring unhappiness and suffering that might *so easily be avoided, is melancholy indeed.*

The object of the following pages will be to bring

home to the reader the close connection between marriage and health—marriage and ill health. If the author succeeds in persuading some among those who have not yet bound themselves irrevocably to regard the question of physical fitness as one of the most vitally relevant among the Realities of Marriage, he will have the comfort of knowing that he has not run in vain neither laboured in vain. Is it really too much to ask of grown up men and women, with an average sense of responsibility that before entering on the uniquely close relationship of matrimony, they should submit themselves to an exhaustive medical examination at the hands of an experienced and conscientious practitioner, and be guided by his disinterested advice?

It is, of course, a truism that in a rough and general way health *does* enter into the selective process by which marriages are brought about. Nature sees to that, to some extent, by making those qualities attractive which seem to promise physical satisfaction and healthy offspring. Instinctively man admires those physical attributes which are specifically feminine, and *vice versa*, and the feeble, narrow-chested "weedy" youth, the lanky, undeveloped or strikingly masculine girl, are not likely to be chosen for their own sakes. As a character in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* says—we are quoting from memory—"There is a kind of man whom no woman with any sense of niceness can stomach." The malformed the blind the halt, the lame, those afflicted with disfiguring disease, the mentally defective are all practically ruled out as candidates for matrimony, when such as these nevertheless find a partner we at once fall to speculating on the motive, and seldom register an approving verdict.\*

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\* One of the effects of the wholesale slaughter of young manhood in the war has been to make girls less fastidious content with inferior specimens as husbands *faute de mie* x

But apart from such cases as those just mentioned—cases where the voice of nature will hardly allow itself to be silenced—there is still an immense deal of marrying on which a proper regard for health would pronounce a veto, and which is the source of untold mischief both for the individuals directly concerned and for their posterity.

We would, to begin with, enter a strong warning against the marriages of mere adolescents and those who, though they may regard themselves as grown up, are still in every respect immature, even though unfortunately they are capable of parenthood. The exercise—especially the habitual exercise—of the sex-function is detrimental to the health of the average young man until he is nearing the middle twenties, he has still to build up his manhood, and for that purpose he had far better practise continence, especially as should he enter marriage as a mere stripling, his children, if he has any, are likely to inherit from him his physical, mental and moral immaturity. Much the same is true of girls who become mothers ere they have become fully formed women: i.e., earlier than at twenty two or three, they themselves suffer from the premature accomplishment of tasks for which their physical frames are as yet insufficiently prepared, and their children will as a rule exhibit an inferior physique and mentality. We are told that in Sweden the average age at marriage is twenty eight for the bridegroom, twenty five and a half years for the bride, and this would seem to be almost ideal. As regards alliances where there is a very considerable disparity of age, there is happily, as a rule, an instinctive repugnance on the part of youth to an elderly or aged mate. A worldly and ambitious father, like John Rhead in *Milestones*—in real life it is more often a mother—may press his daughter to marry a noble lord or wealthy manufacturer old enough to be

her parent; but an inner voice will always whisper to the most unsophisticated girl that such a match is unnatural. His tepid middle age cannot satisfy her legitimate needs, and he himself may have to pay very dearly—even with premature death—for an enterprise for which he lacks the generous vigour of high metttled youth. Too often a wife so unequally yoked will even be tempted to seek elsewhere the satisfactions of which she feels herself to have been defrauded.

We turn at once to a question which crops up with sufficient frequency to make its frank and explicit treatment desirable—we mean the marriage of such near relatives as cousins: its advisability or otherwise. It is quite easy to see how such alliances come to suggest themselves. There exists between cousins, who have known each other from childhood, a freedom and intimacy of social intercourse, together with a certain amount of almost presupposed affection, which may make them particularly disposed, with a little suitable prompting from any quarter, to slide into a warmer feeling than that of mere relationship. There are none of the usual initial barriers to overcome: there is, on the other hand, a natural community of outlook and interests, and the respective families are likely to smile upon the proposed union as “so suitable in *every* way.” It is often the constitutionally shy man who feels emboldened to “make up to” a cousin, when he could not have summoned courage to approach any other girl.

Nevertheless there is considerable justification for the apprehension with which common opinion views the marriages of consanguineous persons, and at the risk of appearing harsh, and while admitting exceptions to the rule we feel inclined to add one word to *Mr. Punch's* famous “Advice to those about to Marry,” making

it read—"Advice to those about to Marry Cousins: DON'T" The reason is quite a simple one. Looked at from the point of view of the two individuals directly concerned, it should be remembered that husband and wife will harmonise best if they are complementary to each other, i.e., if there is an appreciable difference between their general make up, rather than when both bear the same characteristics. But looked at from the point of view of any children of such a marriage, the matter becomes even more serious, for the qualities and defects of both parents, instead of compensating or neutralising each other, will tend to reappear in their offspring in an accentuated and *therefore* undesirable degree. Now it is a homely wisdom which maintains that you can have too much even of a good thing, and this "too much" in one direction—whether it be intellectualism or athleticism, a devotion to music or an absorption in business—will always be obtained by a corresponding "too little" in others. Marriages between near relations are, therefore, on the whole to be viewed with disfavour, any predisposition to inheritable disease is likely to reappear with redoubled force in the next generation, while at best the children of such unions will tend to lack that balance of qualities on which the good estate of the world and of human society chiefly depends. The most conclusive comment on the whole question is furnished by the fact that families which have made a practice of intermarrying invariably degenerate and, after running a downward course, mercifully die out. Consanguineous marriages show a much higher proportion of sterility than the average, while mental disease is distinctly more frequent among the offspring of related than of non related parents. Prof Mantegazza, indeed, puts the chances of some markedly undesirable quality appearing in the children of marriages between near relatives four times as high

as where there is no such connection. In sum, since the world is wide, the candidate for matrimony will be well advised to let his or her glances range beyond the family circle.

But apart from the consideration of blood-relationship, it is surely pernicious folly ever to regard the question of physical fitness as secondary when choosing a life-partner, and those who have acted on that false assumption always discover to their bitter sorrow how very primary this question is. What, for instance, is one to say of a projected marriage where either the prospective bride or bridegroom shows symptoms of incipient tuberculosis, or belongs to a tuberculous family? As a matter of course we shall utter the most emphatic warning against what is, humanly speaking, sure to be a brief and ill-starred venture; and that notwithstanding the presence of other excellences or physical charms that would take the judgment captive. Who does not know the gay optimism, the vein of idealistic chivalry, which so often marks the male consumptive? Who is insensible of the delicate charm of so many consumptive or consumption-threatened girls, whose ardent spirit seems to be shining through the too-tenuous fleshly vesture? It is one of the cruel ironies of nature that beings who in so many cases seem peculiarly made for love, craving it and having it to give, must be adjudged unfit for that condition which, but for one fatal flaw, would seem to be their natural goal, viz., married life.

The verdict, however, lies with the facts, not with our wishes or our feelings; and we cannot too earnestly urge the grave unwisdom of marrying anyone who, even though not exhibiting the signs of consumption himself or herself, belongs to a family some of whose members have already been claimed by that fell disease, a disease

so terribly transmissible from husband to wife, from wife to husband, from parents to offspring, from ailing to healthy child. There is no greater tragedy than to see a still young and beloved life slipping inexorably away, leaving children either unprovided for or deprived of a mother's care, perhaps already infected with the same sinister germ; and those who will pay no heed to the warnings of thousandfold experience will reap the grief they have light-heartedly sown.

Let the fact be quite candidly stated that while consumptives and consumptively-disposed persons have as a rule somewhat above the average share of sexual ardour, sex-intercourse exercises a notably unfavourable effect upon their health; and for the girl with tuberculous predisposition in particular married life must be pronounced positively dangerous. The emotional and nervous excitement of the conjugal relationship; the strain of pregnancy and childbirth; last of all, the long-continued drain inseparable from nursing—all these will not only hasten the progress of the malady in a frame having little power of resistance, but it is a fact worth noting that even previously healthy mothers often develop the symptoms of tuberculosis while suckling an infant.

It is sometimes maintained that a disposition to consumption on the part of a man does not raise the same formidable obstacles to marriage as in the case of a girl; we are even told that there are instances on record where the greater comforts of home, the regular life, the loving care lavished on a husband, have arrested the disease in the early stages. Such beneficent results are especially promised as at least likely to supervene where the husband is free from the struggle for a livelihood, and moreover has sufficient self-control to make very temperate use of his marital privileges. It may be so; but we cannot take the responsibility of

or even seeming to look with approval upon, a terribly risky experiment, having within it the abundant seeds of further tragedies. The utmost we can say is that where a former patient has been pronounced definitely cured by a competent specialist there marriage may become permissible, which is a very different thing from pronouncing it desirable or wholly safe.

Even more definitely, if possible, must we pronounce against marriage where it appears that in one or the other family there has been a number of cases of insanity. Too often alas, such facts are deliberately "kept dark" until it is too late, and irremediable mischief ensues. We do not by any means suggest that an isolated instance of mental trouble ought to raise an absolute barrier—although, where the case is that of the father or mother of one of the parties concerned, it would be wiser to regard it as such, but where the family record shows several such black entries, any project of marriage ought to be desisted from, for maladies of the mind are notoriously inheritable, and may even break out again in the grandchild of an insane person, after skipping his immediate offspring. Those who have once passed through a period of mental disturbance, whether the case is one of heredity or not, must be regarded—to put it mildly—as heavily handicapped from the point of view of matrimony. Even where parental insanity does not reappear in children they often, unfortunately, inherit a disposition to epilepsy, hysteria and a general want of mental stability.

There is a more or less wide borderland between sanity and insanity, inhabited by those ill-balanced mortals whom we call neurasthenic, while on the Continent they are sometimes known as psychopaths. The sufferer from neurasthenia may be a long way from certifiable lunacy, all the same, his or her fits of un-



reasonable depression or elation, uncertain temper, tendency to violence or self-destruction, make such a one an undesirable partner, married life by whose side will as a rule be one long sequence of unhappy incidents. What is sometimes euphemistically called the artistic temperament—the temperament in which emotion and its indulgence have seized the reins—may be very fascinating, but not to the luckless being doomed to suffer from all its vagaries in the position of husband or wife.

But, all talk about the artistic temperament apart, it has to be frankly stated that neurasthenia, whether as cause or effect, is so frequently and so intimately associated with irregularities or disturbances of the sexual life that for that reason alone the neurasthenic is likely to make a thoroughly unsatisfactory mate. On the man's part this trouble frequently manifests itself in what is known as psychic impotence,\* viz. an inability—seated purely in the imagination, but none the less real for that—to perform the conjugal act, or again, the case may be one of true sexual neurasthenia, excessive sexual irritability leading to premature ejaculation immediately after union has commenced, or even before it has taken place. This is only too frequently the outcome of long practised self-abuse and means endless self reproach and self-contempt for the husband, and continual dissatisfaction for the wife who finds herself defrauded of her legitimate expectations in marriage. We had better here dispel the optimistic fiction that marriage is a certain cure for sexual neurasthenia—it may turn out so but it may also aggravate the disorder with deplorable results. In women this abnormality often takes the form of frigidity, a lack of response to a husband's natural desire for union, or a downright

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\* Cf. Chapter VI., page 97

aversion to conjugal relations, which naturally spells discord and unhappiness

In sum, we advise the reader to steer clear of matrimony with the nervy overstrung type as a possible life mate, where matters have gone so far as an engagement, and during that time an impracticable, wildly capricious temper, perpetually oscillating between extremes, manifests itself, there it is better, at whatever cost, to effect a withdrawal from almost certain disaster ere it is too late. The story is told of Abraham Lincoln, who from a mistaken sense of honour married a neurasthenic wife with open eyes, that when his office junior, astonished at his chief's gay attire, asked him on his wedding day where he was going, the future President answered in a tone of deepest melancholy "To hell I suppose". The forecast proved painfully correct, metaphorically speaking. But need Lincoln have gone, knowing what awaited him? We think not.

We turn in the next place to diseases of the heart, which may be either congenital or acquired. It is comparatively rare for people who are born with heart disease to live to a marriageable age, and if they do so, marriage is strongly counter indicated as likely to prove fatal in its effects. In cases where some kind of heart trouble has been acquired, however, it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules, since much depends on the exact form of the malady, the patient's sex and even, as we shall see, his or her outward circumstances.

Marriage is permissible for a man whose heart is not dangerously diseased provided that his means are fairly ample, exempting him from any bitter struggle for a livelihood, and provided also that he will practise a strict sexual moderation. It is different in the case of women whose hearts are, in and by the marriage rela-

tion, subjected to a strain which makes it desirable that that organ should be of at least normal strength and power of resistance. Conjugal intercourse alone taxes and stimulates the heart at any time—and the more severely, the less sound it is, and the same applies even more to the processes of gestation and labour, which in the case of most women leave the heart in distinct need of recuperation. Death in childbirth is so frequently the result of valvular heart disease that that circumstance alone should give us pause. Without absolutely forbidding marriage to girls so suffering, we would insist that they should marry only into easy circumstances, in which they will be spared all heavy exertions, that their husbands must understand the need for much self-denial in the exercise of their conjugal functions, and that pregnancies should be entered upon only where the family physician will take the responsibility of explicitly declaring that the risk may be run.

It would be impossible to bring this chapter to a close without at least a brief reference to two scourges of the human race which, as they stand in close relation to each other, are of peculiarly baleful effect upon married life and happiness—those due to alcohol and that dread enemy of humanity, venereal disease.

There is, of course, a wide difference between the moderate drinker and the dipsomaniac, and we shall not pretend that they are to be lumped together; nevertheless, the hopeless slave of alcoholic craving was once upon a time a moderate drinker. Very often he is the child of someone who fell under the latter category, and possibly had his life kindled in some fatal hour when his father was more or less under the influence of strong drink. By this we do not mean that the father was "intoxicated" in the narrower sense of the term, but that he had consumed just enough alcohol

to affect the constitution of his sperm cells, and under those conditions begot a child cursed from before his birth with the appetite for alcoholic indulgence. Such a hapless child may bear other marks of his inferiority from the cradle to the grave. Thus Prof. Forel, the eminent Swiss alienist, lends his authority to the statement that the thousands of congenital idiots enumerated in the statistics of his country are in the main the products of unions consummated about the time of the vintage, i. e., when the consumption of alcohol is more than usually high.

That there are families of heavy drinkers is of course, well known, and experience enters a strong protest against marriage with even a temperate member, male or female, of a drinking family, lest the curse should later on manifest itself in that seemingly sound branch of a corrupt tree, or afflict, as it is most likely to do, the next generation. In the impressive words of Prof. Ribbing, of the University of Lund, Sweden: "It is not rare to see a young woman undertaking the venture of marriage with a man who, notwithstanding other amiable traits, manifests an over fondness for the flowing bowl. She counts upon her influence being strong enough to reform her husband, and to lead him back to better ways. But as a rule she is doomed to bitter disappointment. The craving for drink returns sooner or later with such intensity as to bear down all other interests whatsoever and the drinker's unhappy wife has a long and dreary lifetime in which to regret her easy faith and too great self-confidence." The worst of it is that the potential drunkard often has so many engaging qualities which mask his specific flaw, he is companionable, vivacious, of generous instincts, not seldom a person of warm affections—but the best of these traits disappear once his vice has developed and thoroughly taken hold of him and his spouse will

bitterly rue her lot as she surveys the wreck of the man who had so charmed her

We have already pointed out the effects of alcoholism on the victim's offspring, it remains to be said that the drunkard will almost always grow coarser in all that affects conjugal relationships—indeed, he may in this particular respect sink to unspeakable depths of depravity and brutality. That one who is afflicted with this craving in its more accentuated forms will grow quite callous to the claims of wife and children to even the necessities of existence, is notorious, and one is inclined on the whole to rejoice that in the end he falls an easy prey to any ailment which a sound organism would have thrown off, but which carries him to a dishonoured grave. The girl who, from whatever delusive motives, allows herself to marry a man given to drink, one of whose habits she has had evidence in his bachelor days, will "sup sorrow" as long as she draws breath, while the children of drunkards show a marked predisposition towards epilepsy, tuberculosis, mental deficiency, and crime—not to mention alcoholism. Better die single a hundred times over than doom oneself—and others—to misery, degradation and despair.

We have previously alluded to the intimate connection between alcohol and venereal disease. Alcoholic indulgence stimulates the sex passion, and drink and prostitution—the main carrier of venereal disease—go hand in hand, as we may daily convince ourselves. Many a man owes lifelong and agonising infirmity, affecting every part of the body, not to a prolonged course of vice but to an isolated act of irregular intercourse, into which he would never have been betrayed but by that glass too many which inflamed desire while blinding his judgment, many a hapless girl, through yielding to a slightly "elevated" lover's importunity,

has had to pay for a moment's ecstasy with a poisoned organism, and if she became sufficiently depraved, has passed the poison on to others causing the curse to spread in ever-widening circles. Many a wife, infected by a husband who himself had contracted the malady by some act of passing infidelity, has languished for years, with shattered health, stricken with sterility, a victim to grave and often incurable uterine troubles, her married happiness for ever destroyed, and what of the exceeding great army of children, blinded at birth through the gonorrhœic poison transmitted to their mothers by their father, or doomed to misery in the very act of generation by a syphilitic parent?

It is no part of our purpose to deal in any detail with syphilis and gonorrhœa, what we want to impress upon our readers is that these are among the great killing diseases, that they are most easily contracted, and impossible effectually to guard against by those who indulge in irregular intercourse, that they are most readily communicated, and that even when they seem to have disappeared from the system the poison often lurks undetected for years, to break out again with devastating effect, fouling the stream and rotting the fabric of life. We make no pretence of regarding fear as a very high motive, nevertheless, having regard to all that is involved we do not shrink from appealing even to this motive—the fear of consequences which, if realised in advance, would keep any sane man from promiscuous sexual indulgence. Gonorrhœa is *not* the mere passing minor trouble, comparable to a cold in the head, it is sometimes ignorantly represented to be, but infection with an insidious poison exceedingly difficult to get rid of, while the devastations wrought by syphilis beggar the power of verbal description or pictorial representation.

What we are here concerned with is the bearing

of venereal disease upon marriage; and we have to say in plain terms that for a man who has ever suffered from either form of that disease to seek the hand of a girl until he has definitely received a clean bill of health from a recognised medical specialist of standing, is one of the basest crimes conceivable, and one which we should like to see ruthlessly punished. We would say further that it is the absolute duty of parents to enlighten their daughters as to the terrible risks they are running in marrying a man who may have contracted a sex-malady, and has not been pronounced wholly free from its lingering germs; and we have to insist yet again that one of the most urgent necessities of legislation is the production, by both parties, of a medical certificate of freedom from venereal disease as the indispensable condition to be complied with before there can be any civil or religious marriage. The effect of such legislation would be not only to preserve the innocent against infection and to safeguard the health of the next generation, but it would put a curb on passion and provide a strong motive for chastity—for after all, even the young man who wants to sow a few wild oats as a rule looks forward ultimately to a settled home life, and would not like to find himself legally debarred from marriage.

In the meantime, and dealing with existing conditions, let it be understood that both gonorrhœa and syphilis are curable; but that the cure must needs be prolonged, that it must be undertaken by a competent medical specialist, and can only be pronounced complete after years have elapsed, and immunity has been established by thorough and repeated medical tests. To have recourse to some unqualified "healer" is to prepare disappointment and disaster for oneself; to accept the assurances of such a one that all is well and marriage is now permissible, is perhaps the most reck-

less act of which a man can be capable—it is the deepest wrong he can do to the woman he professes to love, it is the unpardonable sin against his unborn children. So long as he carries the disease germs about with him he must not only remain single but for sheer decency's sake refrain from all sexual intercourse, and if that should mean a sentence for life, then for life it must be \*

We may seem to have written strongly, and even harshly, in insisting upon these many barriers to marriage, but our apparent harshness is dictated by the one desire to preserve our readers from the worst and most unavailing of regrets. There is nothing happier in this world than a happy marriage, but also nothing more tragic than a marriage which has gone wrong and so far as we can guard against such a going wrong by reason of disease it is the plainest commonsense to do so.

But will human nature brook such restraints and allow itself to be debarred from the joys of love and home by the cold pronouncements of medical science? We began this chapter with a fable we will close it with a recital of fact.

There is a certain incurable disease known technically as "hæmophilia" which means that those afflicted with it have a tendency to suffer great loss of blood on the slightest provocation or even without any assignable cause whatever. The victims of this malady lead a wretched life hedged around with innumerable precautions against every scratch cut or abrasion and since such things are unavoidable they are always in poor health, and seldom live to any normal age. Now it is a peculiarity of hæmophilia—which for some reason



is chiefly met with in the Alpine districts of central Europe—that it is transmitted, not directly, but from an afflicted father through his healthy daughter to her male offspring, though she be married to a healthy man.

This distressing malady had been endemic for a long time in the village of Tenna, in Switzerland, and it looked as though ailing generation must succeed ailing generation for ever. But the maidens of Tenna whose fathers suffered from the disease thought differently; they knew that if they married, they must become mothers of infirm and wretched sons, and taking counsel, they resolved that this should not be. In the bloom of youth, in perfect health, with life and love beckoning, these heroic village girls vowed themselves to a single life rather than purchase their own satisfaction and happiness at the cost of their children's misery. One may doubt whether a nobler act of self-denial, conceived and carried out in a finer spirit, is recorded in any annals than the Great Renunciation made by the maidens of Tenna, whereby the sickness was stamped out, and those who would have been its victims remained mercifully unborn.

Is there any need to point a moral, or to say to those whom it may concern, Go, and do likewise?

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The following may be consulted with advantage:—

"Manhood," by Charles Thompson, Chapter V, "The Race of the Future"

"Sexual Physiology," by Trall, Chapter XV, "Hereditary Transmission"

"Man and Woman," by Havelock Ellis

## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE THRESHOLD OF MARRIAGE.

The engagement period, of which the present chapter will treat, ought, for reasons which will become apparent, to be a fairly brief period—from which it does not follow that this will prove a very brief chapter; for the engagement period is also an extremely important period, and this will certainly be a very important chapter.

In Continental countries, it is known, an engagement is a contract second in seriousness and binding power only to marriage itself. It is entered into after very mature consideration, it implies the consent of both families, and it has an official and quasi-irrevocable stamp put on it by announcements in the public press and the sending-out of engagement cards. What, from our English point of view, too many of these formally sanctioned and recognised *fiançailles* lack, is the element of spontaneity, of mutual strong affection; for however frequently we may be told of the success which attends the "arranged" marriage, there is that in the English make-up which revolts against this system, and remains obstinately convinced that a *sine qua non* of a union is that the two partners should love one another.

of her nature of which she had previously been hardly conscious, and both, ere they know it, may find themselves hard pressed by passion

Now it is indeed to be hoped that both of them are capable of passion, which in itself is not a thing to be ashamed of, but to be used as a gift, but it is not at all desirable that they should be struggling in the grasp of a longing which they may not satisfy—still less, that they should even partially yield to their longing, and overstep the frontiers of the permissible, to the loss of self respect and respect for one another. The French—who, as we obstinately fail to recognise, are not a volatile and impulsive but a peculiarly logical people—have a characteristic saying to the effect, "*Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*"—"A door had better be either open or shut," and this homely image seems to apply very forcibly to the subject under discussion. A door left ajar for any length of time merely becomes a nuisance, and seems to serve little purpose beyond creating a draught. Given two average, normal healthy individuals we repeat our advice that the strain should not be prolonged beyond a short duration, and that marriage should follow upon engagement with the least avoidable delay.

"But," it will be argued, "all sorts of reasons economic and other, may make a speedy marriage impossible." Let us hear some of these reasons that we may judge their soundness. "I am not earning nearly enough to support a wife—it will be years before I can do so in comfort, in the meantime we must remain engaged." "I have an ailing mother, and my place is with her. If Harry wants to marry me, he must wait until 'something happens' to mother—in the meantime we must just remain engaged." Who has not heard these familiar pleas? To all of them

of very great difficulty, and that frequently the obstacles in the way of solving this problem are a cause of postponement. Where it is simply a question of a few months, the postponement must, of course, be put up with, in the pleasant certainty that after a little unavoidable waiting the young people will at any rate be able to start life together in a home of their own. But where conditions are as at present, there we strongly hold that a period spent in "rooms"—in spite of the incidental discomforts and the lack of that absolute privacy which is so much to be desired—constitutes a lesser evil in comparison with a long and dreary putting-off of marriage "till we can get into a house of our own." We are not by any means blind to the manifold disadvantages of a young married couple's life in lodgings, but we adhere to the conviction that, such as they are, it is better that these disadvantages should be faced and borne together than that they should be allowed to prevent our pledged and serious lovers from attaining the goal of their desire.

In simpler times than ours we believe that the preparation of the trousseau was apt to be a long drawn out affair, as everything, so far as possible, was to be the work of the bride's own deft and industrious fingers; that it should be so was her pride, and the wedding had many a time to wait until she had completed this important preliminary task. Who that is middle aged has not pleasant Victorian recollections of a mysterious institution spoken of with knowing smiles as "the bottom drawer"? A good deal of homely sentiment attached to the gradual piling-up of these treasures, but, for good or ill, in these modern days the need for this slow process has gone, all that is requisite may be purchased ready-made, and thus at any rate another cause for delay has gone.

Let us, while glancing at this subject of the bride's

"making things" for her future married life, quote a woman's shrewd and wise saying as not altogether inapposite "No girl would undertake to cut out so much as a camisole from the cheapest material without instruction, pattern and measurements, but how many girls will cut rashly, without pattern, measurements or instruction, into the priceless material of life, their own and another's!" Varying the simile, is not the reproach as true in relation to men as to women? With incredible light-mindedness and headlong haste both sexes will rush into the most binding of contracts, with the most inexperienced hands they will slice away at material which, once spoiled, is irreplaceable—and then they wonder that an immensely arduous enterprise undertaken in such a spirit does not turn out prosperously. How could it?

Just because, by the time a grown man and woman become engaged there should exist between them a very deep and sincere respect and mutual confidence—miles removed from the mere stir of the senses or the offering and pleased acceptance of *banal* compliments—there ought to be during the phase of their engagement, a perfectly frank interchange of views on their future physical relationships. These will inevitably play so important a share in their married life, they will so largely determine its happiness or otherwise that we cannot too earnestly insist on the wisdom of establishing some quite clear understanding on these matters between people who are so soon to enter into that close union of body and spirit. The idea that such things cannot even be mentioned by a man and woman before marriage is a relic of that truly insane, i.e., unwholesome attitude towards sex which has done such an infinite amount of harm in the past, and which all enlightened lovers of their kind must strive to replace by

something more in keeping with good sense and human dignity. It is altogether undesirable that up to a given—and after all arbitrarily fixed—moment a topic of the highest significance, and one which has inevitably occupied much of these future partners' thought, should be regarded as *taboo*, too indecent for allusion, let alone candid discussion. Can we wonder that such a policy as this—the careful avoidance of the whole subject, the elaborate pretence that passion is a factor which does not enter into our scheme of life—can only vitiate the whole idea of sex *ab initio* in the countless minds in which it has been allowed to reign? We say deliberately that there are any number of people—both men and women—who, as a result of the conventional attitude in which they have been brought up, never through all their lives, as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers, throw off the conviction that sex belongs to the hidden things of darkness, of which it is a shame even to speak—mysteriously fascinating, mysteriously necessary, but also mysteriously evil.

Now where this frame of mind persists it imports an element of corruptness into marriage from the outset, and we must not cease to protest against such a perversion of the truth, which would make unclean what God has cleansed. That the very fountain of life should be so wantonly poisoned is truly lamentable, and the cause of a myriad tragedies, and the saddest reflection on these tragedies is that they need not have happened, that these human lives need not have been marred, broken, wasted. Truly does the ancient writer say that "God hath made every thing beautiful in its time," what a crime to twist and defile His handiwork!

Let us speak plainly and emphatically. It befits the man and woman who, on the strength of mutual affection and mutual esteem, contemplate marriage, to put away with a resolute hand the pernicious delusion that sex

is something inseparable from impurity, and that the satisfactions connected with it are somehow disreputable—to be secretly enjoyed, but really too dubious to be talked about. At the risk of seeming to pitch our demands unreasonably high, we would almost say that whosoever is not able to think and look upon sex without a sense of the forbidden, whose sweetness is the sweetness of stolen waters, is not fit—certainly not ideally fit—for entering what should be, but so seldom is, a holy estate. And in any case the plighted lover and his beloved, about to become joint navigators of the ocean of marriage, ought to find the courage, in some hour consecrated by perfect trust, to speak calmly and openly together on their future relation as husband and wife, as the potential father and mother of children to be born of their love.

We shall make ourselves perfectly clear if we say that there ought to be an understanding between them as to *the place of sex-love in their married life*. So many marriages make for shipwreck because husbands and wives start with confused and mutually divergent notions on that subject—she, perhaps, regarding it as an indulgence which should be cut down to a minimum, he likewise thinking of it as an indulgence, but one to be enjoyed without restraint. "Reciprocity in sex-love," says Lord Dawson of Penn, "is the physical counterpart of sympathy;" and for lack of that reciprocity, that physical counterpart of sympathy, a multitude of marriages must be written down as failures. It were much to be desired that all candidates for matrimony should ponder and feel the essential sanity and wisdom of these words, addressed to the Church Congress by the great medical authority whom we have just quoted:

"Sex-love has, apart from parenthood, a purport of its own. It is something to prize and to cherish for its own sake. It is an essential part of health and

happiness in marriage                      If sexual union is a gift of God, it is worth learning how to use it. Within its own sphere it should be cultivated so as to bring physical satisfaction to both, not merely to one. The attainment of mutual and reciprocal joy in their relations constitutes a firm bond between two people and makes for durability of their marriage tie. More marriages fail from inadequate and clumsy sex love than from too much sex-love \*\*

One all important point on which certainly a frank and unambiguous understanding should be reached some time prior to the final ceremony, is the question of children—whether both future partners desire to take up the responsibilities of parenthood, and whether they wish to have a child as soon as possible, or to postpone its arrival. Where this most important issue is left unsettled—indeed, unmentioned—from motives of misplaced modesty, there we shall have a first and serious possibility of marital disagreement. Those who are professionally and confidentially consulted on matrimonial problems know that it is far less uncommon than one would imagine for marriages to remain unconsummated for a long time—with all the constraint and inner disharmony which flow from such an unnatural state of affairs—because the new-made wife, *after marriage*, had evinced an insurmountable objection to motherhood and, indeed, to conjugal relations. Of course she does not

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\* Where owing to the strangulating effects of social custom speech seems at first too difficult a feat to achieve the reading by both parties of some book of candid counsel and instruction may serve to break the ice. The present writer may here be allowed to refer to his volume *Rise Wedlock* if only on the ground that he has received so many acknowledgments showing that the book has been found specially helpful in this particular connection viz. as enabling engaged couples to overcome their shyness and talk frankly and seriously about serious matters which should be surveyed in advance and from a common standpoint.



know of the real hardship such an attitude inflicts upon her husband, because she is, as a rule, quite ignorant of the physiological facts of the case, and measures his desire by her desirelessness; while he finds himself condemned to a condition which is neither that of the married man nor of the bachelor free to fix his choice. Hence every kind of *misère*, undignified stratagems, unavailing appeals, at last perhaps secret infidelities or open breaches—all for want of a little necessary and wholesome frankness at the outset. We say emphatically, and speaking from knowledge gained by exceptional opportunities of seeing what goes on behind the outward frontage of many married lives, that it is unsafe and unwise to leave this point unventilated, and simply to trust that it will solve itself if left alone. In ninety-nine instances it will, but in the hundredth—which may be yours—it will grow knottier and more and more irritating unless attended to from the first.

It is always possible that for reasons of health or pocket, or a dozen others, there ought to be no children, at least for a time. It may be the case that the prospective bride's family physician, while permitting marriage, has entered a warning against the possible ill-effects of the strain incident to pregnancy and childbirth, and left the matter there, supplying no further hint, but leaving it rather to be inferred that no intercourse must take place. Now it is a matter of simple honour that the prospective husband should not be left in the dark on such an all-important subject until it is too late for him to reconsider; it is a piece, partly, of *naïveté*, but partly also, it must be feared, of sophistical calculation, for a girl under such, or under any, circumstances to argue: "Jack loves me so much that he won't mind when I tell him. I can't tell him now, of course; afterwards will do—only I must make sure of him first." Being a man, with the legitimate longings

of manhood, he will mind quite enormously when he discovers that those longings are to be frustrated just when he had expected their fulfilment. Without any question whatever he has an elementary right to be informed in time, if there are conditions, whether physical or of any other kind which interpose an obstacle to the consummation of the marriage he contemplates, he may then, in such a case as we have cited, i e., where the doctor has pronounced against child bearing, either temporarily or permanently, seek to explain that there are harmless methods which will allow of conjugal intercourse while preventing what under the circumstances would be untoward consequences. If his explanation succeeds in carrying conviction, and obtaining a promise to let one or other such preventive method be used, well and good, but if he meets with determined resistance before marriage, he had better not buoy himself up with the delusive hope of breaking that resistance down after he has taken the irrevocable step—irrevocable, for not one man in a thousand will face the ordeal, the expense and the ever-uncertain issue of a suit for a declaration of nullity of marriage.

We have dwelt upon this topic at such length because it is not altogether rare for girls to enter matrimony with the tacit intention of evading its obligations, whether wholly or as far as ever possible. Let it be stated in the most emphatic terms that it is simply useless, and worse than useless, for any woman to indulge the pious hope that she will be able to "make it up to her husband in other ways." Masculine human nature is not built along those lines, and it is wisest to realise in advance that it is impossible to raise the edifice of even a tolerable married life on such an unsatisfactory foundation. A little timely candour may here prevent a great and irremediable disaster for both parties for the matter of that, and if the worst comes

to the worst, ten broken engagements, with all the mortification, spiteful gossip and bitter tears that may attend them, are better than one wretched marriage. Marriage is an adventure full of uncertainties at best; but there are some uncertainties at any rate that can and ought to be ruled out, and this is one of them.

The engagement period, especially if it is confined within reasonable dimensions, must of necessity be a busy one, a time of much and intense thinking ahead and active getting ready; but for all that, or rather for this very reason, it ought not to consist of a succession of fatiguing "rush" days or weeks, leaving the bride to face the ordeal of the wedding and the early days of her new existence in a thoroughly exhausted, fagged-out condition. Who has not seen tired, pale-faced brides whose appearance, as they faltered up the aisle in a manner truly suggestive of victims being led to the altar, made one feel that what they needed was a rest-cure rather than a wedding reception and a honeymoon? Mother and sisters admitted that "Edith had been doing far too much;" only mother and sisters ought to have very energetically seen to it that Edith did not do it—that she had plenty of sleep, plenty of fresh air, plenty of good food partaken of with clockwork regularity. We insist upon all these things as a matter of course in the case of a strong man preparing for some athletic contest, watching over his "fitness" with the most jealous care. What would happen if he entered the lists a shade less than completely fit? It is strange that we should show less concern, amounting to absolute neglect, in the case of a girl preparing for a fundamental change which will prove a severe tax upon her, both physically and mentally; that we should allow her to approach these new and strange calls upon her in a

natural That what on his part is always accompanied by an intoxication of the senses should leave her cold and indifferent strikes him as altogether "wrong," and that "wrongness" is apt to make itself quite bewilderingly felt on the very first occasion when he approaches his beloved He can understand, if he has any imagination at all, her modest shrinking from his touch, but that, this initial resistance overcome, there should be no responsiveness on her part, nothing but tears and perchance exclamations of pain, no manifestation of happiness, disconcerts him profoundly He feels as though he had stumbled on the very threshold of his married life, he has hurt where he meant to love, and feels hurt and disappointed himself

The young wife, on the other hand, will be liable to feel frightened, perhaps repelled, by the incomprehensible vehemence of her husband, she cannot understand why he should seek with so much ardour what gives her so little pleasure, but rather the reverse That, indeed, remains the permanent attitude of not a few wives towards the physical side of marriage

Clearly, there is an urgent need here for the removal of misunderstandings arising at the very outset The bride should have been taught the simple physiological facts which make man the ardent wooer and pursuer, with a definite want caused by conditions to which on her side nothing corresponds, the bridegroom also should have learned these facts, which will explain to him that, genuinely though his new made wife loves him, he must not expect her to display an ardour or eagerness comparable to his own In almost every case a woman's capacity for sexual gratification is still slumbering in her at the time of her marriage, and is awakened only after the marriage has been repeatedly consummated, and union has become painless and easy. In a variously estimated but deplorably large

proportion of married women that capacity is never awakened at all, not necessarily because it is non-existent, but through ignorance and mismanagement on their husbands' part.\*

We spoke a moment ago of the time when union has "become painless and easy," i.e., for the woman; it is neither the one nor the other at first, and this fact has to be clearly faced by both parties. She should realise that she will have to endure a certain amount of—not intolerable, and in any case only passing—discomfort; he should, from the knowledge of this circumstance, draw the obvious inference, that it is incumbent on him to proceed with the maximum of tenderness and consideration, and to cause his bride as little pain as he possibly can.

It is to be presumed that he knows such an elementary fact as that in order that he may have full conjugal relations he has to rupture the membrane which partly closes the entrance of the vagina; this may not prove altogether easy, and will in any case cause an effusion of blood. The bleeding is not likely to be very copious, but there are instances to the contrary, and we recommend that a simple styptic for staunching the blood should be in readiness on the bedside table.

What neither the bridegroom nor the bride is likely to know is that the hymen is not the only obstacle to complete and pleasurable relations; yet the facts are so plainly indicated that it is amazing to read in a widely-circulated work, written by a woman, that "once the barrier," viz., the hymen, "is broken down, union is easy and delightful." There is no such immediate ease, and that for a reason which is quite obvious the moment it is stated. A virgin's vaginal passage, while capable of being so widened and

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\* Cf. "Wise Wedlock," Chapter VII., pages 83-87.

stretched as to admit the male member, is too narrow to do so at first with comfort to herself, and this widening or stretching process will not be completed by the first or the second union. Even after the rupture of the hymen, therefore the husband will meet with some resistance which may even be somewhat considerable. A good emollient, therefore, should be applied, in order to ease what may else prove so difficult a process as to be practically impossible, because accompanied by too much pain. We advise vaseline, preferably in tube form, as best for the purpose, and suggest that this should always be kept handy, at least until a fairly complete adjustment has been effected.

Where these precautions are neglected, there the bride may suffer all the distress accompanying "vaginismus," i.e., "an involuntary spasmodic closure of the mouth of the vagina attended with such excessive supersensitiveness as to form a complete barrier to coition." Vaginismus has been described by the late Sir W. H. Broadbent as "the bane of early married life," though fortunately it is not of very common occurrence. "In some instances," says the great authority whom we have just quoted, "the woman may at first submit to intercourse, bearing the great suffering under the idea that it is not unusual. After a night or two, however, her courage fails, her nervous system begins to give way, she shivers with terror at the approach of her husband, and consequently all attempts at connection have to be abandoned." Wherever intercourse whether effected or merely attempted, is accompanied by extreme pain, with no signs of improvement, the matter is one for the physician, happily, relief may be obtained and a complete cure established without difficulty.

If thus on the side of even the normal woman.

there are certain obstacles to be overcome before marital relations become mutually satisfactory, it occasionally happens that a bridegroom, at the very time when he had thought to enter into possession of his treasure, finds himself unexpectedly and disconcertingly unable to play his part\*. The erection necessary for penetration fails to take place, or his sensory climax supervenes too quickly and ejaculation of the semen takes place before there has been any connection, which consequently becomes impossible—and repeated attempts produce no better result. This is indeed an unhappy and humiliating position for the bridegroom to be in—to find himself stricken with impotence just when he meant to manifest his virile power—and scarcely less unhappy for the bride, who finds herself a wife only in name. In many instances the young husband's impotence is only "psychic," the outcome of nervous tension, loss of confidence, and this as a rule returns after a short time as he becomes used to the new intimacy with his wife. Physical impotence, on the other hand, especially when it manifests itself in the habitual premature discharge of semen, is generally due to sexual overirritability and neurasthenia, brought on in many instances by solitary indulgence. We do not say by any means that this trouble may not yield to treatment, but this will take time, and impose no small amount of self discipline—to say nothing of regret and self reproach—upon the man who finds that he has not the capacity for carrying out the functions implied in the marriage contract. His case is not desperate, nevertheless, he is heavily punished for his earlier excesses and has, in the old and warning words "received in himself that recompense of his error which was due"

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\* Cf Chapter IV page 69 and in Chapter V page 147

Let us, however, assume that there have been no mishaps or misadventures at the start, that the marriage has been properly consummated, and that after the first few unions a happy equilibrium, both physical and emotional, has established itself between husband and wife. The question will naturally arise in their minds, with what frequency they may celebrate the rite of union—what constitutes a too much, and where to draw the line. All manner of attempts have been made to fix such limits. To Zoroaster is attributed the advice that intercourse should take place every ninth day; to Solon that it should occur thrice each month; while Luther is erroneously credited with having counselled two unions each week. But the fact is that it is quite futile to lay down any such general rules for what must in the nature of the case vary with the health, the strength, the temperament, the ages, of the individuals concerned. What would be injurious and excessive for a man of feeble physique, will leave another, who is the picture of fitness, far from satisfied; that the young and full-blooded will have stronger desires and be capable of more frequent satisfactions than the elderly and worn, is too self-evident to require being stated. We are not going to attempt even any special prescription for the period of the honeymoon; we realise that there will be a tendency at the outset, and assuming all goes well, for two young people greatly in love with one another to seek and accord each other the privilege of mutual possession rather more often than cold reason would approve. That tendency, however, will presently correct itself quite of its own accord, and there is little harm in the exaltation of the senses characteristic of these first weeks, provided that the honeymoon is otherwise spent quietly rather than in a round of travel and sight-seeing; it is this rushing about, these expeditions here, there and everywhere, which prove too much for many



brides, and strain their constitution far beyond what it will bear without injurious effects

The two key-words which should govern the marital relationship are Spontaneity and Moderation. So long as the man's desire for union arises spontaneously, with the external symptom of erection manifesting itself quickly, vigorously and of its own accord, we may say that such an indication is as a rule sufficient to show that union will not be injurious to him, and provided he understands the art of moving his wife to a willing response her compliance will not harm her, assuming her general health to be satisfactory. Under such circumstances unions may occur as often as three or four times in the course of one week without ill effects upon husband or wife, though, we hasten to add, hardly *every* week. On the other hand, we would say very distinctly that if there is a lack of such spontaneity as just described, it is nothing short of folly on a husband's part to have recourse to any artificial stimulation for the purpose of enabling him to have relations with his wife, it is the overflow of his vitality which alone he ought to expend in the conjugal embrace, not the capital of his strength. If on the following day he can go about his duties without a feeling of lassitude and exhaustion doing full justice to his duties, he will know that he has not exceeded.

It will be asked why we should be considering the husband's side more than the wife's. The explanation is to be found in that fundamental disparity of endowment to which we have repeatedly made reference. The act of union owing to the loss of semen involved, tells more heavily upon the man than upon the woman, whose organism exhibits no corresponding phenomenon. She will almost invariably be less eager for the embrace than her partner until her eagerness has been aroused

by him, but she will also by reason of her greater passivity, and being so to speak, the recipient party, find herself less severely exhausted by even repeated unions than he would. It will be her part in the great majority of cases as it will also be her wisdom, to hold his desires in check rather than to inflame them to be the one who grants a supreme favour rather than to offer herself. Man values what he has to win, he is apt to weary of what he may have for rather less than the asking. Of course there are women more highly strung, more highly "sexed," than others, and these as they will know greater transports than their more lymphatic sisters, will also have to be more careful than the latter, lest they sin against their health by too frequent unions. In the whole regulation of conjugal relations there has to be a wise and loving considerateness of husband for wife of wife for husband together with a watchful regard for their mutual respect and personal dignity.

Here we would emphasise a point which is very frequently quite ignored and the neglect of which is the cause of much unhappiness and downright disaster, it is of the utmost importance that the wife should reach, in the conjugal embrace a sensory climax or exaltation corresponding to that which marks the seminal flow on the husband's part. It is true that she will not do so unless she loves her husband, but many wives who do love their husbands quite sincerely experience no such climax and are set down by their husbands as naturally—and disappointingly—frigid. We are inclined to the view that real sexual anæsthesia is much rarer than a superficial observation would lead one to think, what happens in the great majority of such cases is that the husband, in his ignorance of the different characteristics of man and woman proceeds to union without any preliminary wooing, such as is needed in every instance

in order to render his wife either physically or emotionally desirous of intercourse. The act, thus, is over for him before she has come anywhere near her climax, and she, being conscious of no desire aroused or appeased, is unable to understand the intense satisfaction her husband derives from a process which leaves her cold, and to which she wishes to lend herself as rarely as possible, especially if she dreads the possibilities of motherhood. Or—and this is almost worse—her feelings may have been stirred but not satisfied by what, for her, is an uncompleted act, and she may, in such a case, consciously try to stimulate her husband to an early repetition, with results which, for the reasons previously stated, can hardly fail to be injurious to his wellbeing.

A thoughtful husband will not content himself with seeking his own satisfaction, but aim at his wife's, he will accordingly, before attempting intercourse, seek to dispose her to an active reciprocity of feeling. Should his climax, nevertheless, supervene before she has reached hers, he should actively continue union until that result has been obtained, as in the case of nearly every woman who loves her husband it can be. The wife who has tasted the joys which she is capable of experiencing will seldom be reluctant, except for reasons of health, to accord her wedded lover the last favour, only it must always be sought as a favour, never demanded as a right.

We have stated already that the frequency with which marital relations may safely take place will depend upon a variety of considerations, varying from individual to individual—age, health and temperament being the chief. It is well that the partners should not be unequally yoked—the ardent to the frigid, the strong to the weak, the young to the old—or disharmony will

infallibly manifest itself, such troubles are easy enough to diagnose, but desperately difficult—often indeed, impossible—to cure. Let it be said in this place that the man who works intensely and with concentration at some task—especially if it be creative or intellectual—will as a rule have but a small margin comparatively, for the satisfactions of sex, he will have to husband his energies, and should content himself with a sparing exercise of conjugal functions. Again, most men who reach middle age should set the same kind of limit to themselves in the field of sex which they recognise as reasonable and inevitable in the field of athletics. There comes a time when the fast sprinter and maker of centuries discovers that his heart and lungs are no longer equal to the efforts in which he once delighted, he knows, moreover, that if he tries to flout ignore or force nature he is likely to pay heavily for his presumption. We confess to looking with a good deal of misgiving upon an elderly man marrying a blooming girl, for this reason—that he will be tempted to demonstrate to her what is in the nature of the case impossible viz, that he is as vigorous and capable as a man of half his age, and as well qualified to give her the satisfactions which are youth's due. We would say in plain terms that such foolhardy attempts are always attended by imminent danger, the ageing organism cannot stand the strain, and the result of undue exertion and sexual excitement has too often been a seizure, the bursting of an artery, and premature death.\*

But even when both partners are in normal health and at the height of their physical powers, moderation will always prove its own reward, and a "too little" will be wiser than a "too much." The nemesis which waits on excess is not only exhaustion fatigue and

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\* See also Chapter XI on 'The Receding Tide'

positive injury, but satiety. We enjoy a meal the best when several hours' fast and exertion have created a wholesome hunger; but let one repast be offered to us before the previous one has been digested, and we shall partake of the most *recherché* dishes with a languid and "finikin" appetite. The average wife will need little admonition in this respect, but many husbands wantonly blunt their own powers of enjoyment by over-indulgence. Ellen Key hits the nail on the head when she makes the following acute observation on the place of sex-love in men and women respectively: "Of course a woman longs for a man to give her the satisfactions of sense; but while in her case this longing often rises to the surface only long after she has loved a man so deeply that she would sacrifice her life for his sake, a man's desire for the possession of a woman often awakens before he loves her enough to sacrifice his little finger for her. A woman's love as a rule arises in the soul and travels toward the senses, but does not always reach that destination; a man's arises in the senses and travels in the direction of the soul, but does not always attain that mark. That, of all existing differences between the sexes, is the most tormenting for both."

We may here remark in passing that, while strongly counselling moderation, we are not convinced that what are known as regular habits in the exercise of marital functions are to be *unreservedly recommended*; passion and routine make a bad blend, and it is better that husband and wife should obey an imperious impulse of mutual tenderness when it comes than that their unions should be pedantically "timed" and measured out by rote.

In this respect almost less than in any other can we profitably allow ourselves to become enslaved to habit, so as to depend on a certain want being punctually satisfied every so often. Here again the analogy between

sexual desire and hunger breaks down. Self discipline must make us able to rise superior to our sexual wants, be they never so strong and in married life any kind of clockwork regularity in regard to this particular matter is in the nature of the case out of the question. To begin with, the phenomena of menstruation will always oppose an effectual barrier to male desire, but quite apart from this, a woman's state of health will many a time make the thought of union distasteful to her when her husband might desire it, and within reason the decision on this issue must rest with her. To a man of any refinement of feeling the thought of having conjugal relations with a clearly unwilling partner, who in the end yields her body to him only for peace' sake, should prove sufficiently repellent to make him prefer a good deal of restraint, where that restraint is lacking, and a husband insists on his "rights," there he must not wonder if his wife, revolting at his use of her as a mere instrument conceives for him something between contempt and actual dislike. How, after repeated experiences of this kind, can his approaches fill her with anything but suffering disgust? We would very strongly advise the masculine reader to make himself acquainted, if he does not already know it, with Mr Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*, where he will learn what are the feelings likely to be engendered by an assertion and enforcement of conjugal rights, even when such enforcement means to the wife a crucifixion of flesh and spirit.

Again, so called regular habits of intercourse have to suffer prolonged interruption during at least the later stages of pregnancy, and for some time after confinement, as well as during absences from home, etc., etc., and nothing is less desirable than that a husband under such circumstances should feel himself a martyr, or think that he is called upon to bear intolerable deprivation for in that case his next step in the order of reason

is apt to take the form of imagining himself justified looking elsewhere for compensations whenever he is denied access to his wife. How disastrously this perversion of conjugal ethics operated during the War is well known to need more than a passing mention. Marriage does not at all mean unlimited opportunities of the satisfaction of the sex-instinct, nor were it desirable that it should mean anything of the kind; for limited opportunities are seldom prized, while the opportunity we need perhaps more than any other is that for self-mastery and unselfishness. Matrimony, especially for us, affords this in full measure; that is why it trains the highest type of humanity.

We have said, and we repeat, that within reasonable decision on the "yes" or "no" of conjugal intercourse on any given occasion must rest with the wife, the initiative will as a rule come from her husband. A man will not esteem his wedded partner less, but rather more, if he has to say of her, like Posthumus to Imogen—

Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained  
And pray'd me oft forbearance, did it with  
A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't  
Might well have warm'd old Saturn

Let him still be content to sue for his privileges, showing a lover's zest and a lover's gratitude, and when necessary a lover's patience and chivalry.

On the other hand it must be pointed out that a wife's refusals must not be dictated by mere whim or capricious fancy; she also has taken certain duties upon herself, and there may well be times when she will be wisely guided in complying with her husband's request as because she desires relations at that particular nature than from an understanding of what are the necessities which make him desire what she has to give. To plead, as one has known some of the extremers

feminists do, that, married or single, a woman has the full right to dispose of herself, and that since all the discomforts and dangers of pregnancy and motherhood fall upon her, she may permanently deny herself to her husband if so inclined is the kind of foolishness which fills one with despair—it is to answer egoism with egoism and unreason with unreason. There are no "unlimited rights" in marriage any more than there are "unlimited opportunities," for the matter of that, every contract implies a voluntary self limitation, an agreement to make mutual concessions in return for mutual help on the part of both contracting parties.

The true rule which should govern every marriage has never been put more perfectly than in the words "Let the husband render unto the wife her due and likewise, also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband, and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season." If we could trace the origin of a good many alienations which in course of time led men to form illicit connections, we should find how often a negative breach of the marriage bond on the wife's part preceded the positive one on the husband's.

One is sometimes asked what is the best time for conjugal relations to take place—at night on retiring to bed or in the morning with new gathered strength and energy. We are of opinion that under anything like normal conditions the former is the more suitable time with the proviso that husband and wife are in good health that neither of them should be in a state of positive exhaustion or fatigue and that intercourse should not have been preceded by the consumption of alcoholic beverages—the latter for reasons previously given. Then the nervous and emotional strain of union



will be succeeded by a pleasant lassitude, and a wholesome sleep, refreshing and restoring, will quickly supervene. To begin the day with a big expenditure of energy is to start on the day's duty at something below par, insufficiently alert and vigorous, and cannot be recommended. We are loth to lay down a hard-and-fast rule on the subject, and no doubt there will be many exceptional circumstances justifying married couples in having intercourse in the morning, but on the whole the balance would seem to incline somewhat heavily against that practice.

There is, however, one rule we would lay down with emphasis and even with enthusiasm; that is to say we would insist upon the paramount importance of rigorous cleanliness in everything pertaining to the physical side of marriage. Frequent ablutions of the parts directly concerned and of the neighbouring regions are a necessity not to be neglected by either husband or wife. The whole body should, of course, be kept fresh and fragrant, lest the close contacts incident to married life should ever lose their delightful nature, or even awake repulsion; but the strictest hygienic care must be especially given to the organs of generation, and that again more particularly on the morning after union has taken place. The last vestige of romance will quickly vanish where these measures are not scrupulously observed. Many readers will think such advice superfluous; we know that unfortunately it is not, and hence deem it best to underline somewhat strongly what we admit should be so obvious as scarcely to require mention.

Since the physical is, as we said in opening this chapter, the soil from which the spiritual is to spring, let us see to it that this soil is kept sweet and free from impurities; it is the least that we can do, both from the point of view of æsthetics and from that of health.

## CHAPTER VII

## EXPECTANT MOTHERHOOD

We have had occasion ere now to register our dissent from that view of marriage and marital relationships which looks upon both as having for their aim simply and solely the procreation of children, and whose advocates contend that such relationships are sanctioned for that reason alone, and no other. Such a view, though often put forward in the name of religion, is almost incredibly crude, and one may doubt whether it is really acted upon by those who profess it. For marriage is assuredly something more than a mechanism for replenishing the earth, it is a companionship of two individuals, each incomplete, each finding its complement in the other—a companionship which extends far beyond the share taken by husband and wife in the begetting, bearing and rearing of offspring but embraces a vast variety of interests, and as regards conjugal intercourse it is a pleasure to quote a highly conservative writer, who is candid enough to say that "this is a factor whose significance goes far beyond the satisfaction of a physical want. It comes to be the expression of mutual affection—a means for maintaining and strengthening that affection, and thus the spiritual communion of husband and wife. To the mere delight of sense there has been superadded one of spirit, viz., the consciousness of union with and surrender to the

beloved It is this which gives its consecration to sexual relations "

Nevertheless, while fully maintaining that in every normal marriage intercourse will often and legitimately take place simply as an expression of deepest tenderness and mutual longing, the normal man, and still more the normal woman, will desire to see their union crowned by visible tokens of the happiness they have shared, of those moments when they were no longer separate individualities, but what a modern writer calls *cette chose unique et mystérieuse que fait l'amour* If maternity is a stronger passion than paternity—if, as we said, a woman desires a child for its own sake—a man desires to have a child by the woman he loves and the truer and deeper his love, the more intense will be his desire Yet the attainment of that dear wish is attended by discomfort, pain and serious risk for the woman, while upon the man who is worthy the name its realisation will impose not a little self restraint, discipline, new duties of thoughtfulness and forbearance, which will test him and reveal him to his wife—for good or ill—as never before We have elsewhere\* expressed the opinion that in most cases it will probably be well that the first baby should not arrive until toward the end of the second year of marriage, thus giving the partners a breathing-space and time for mutual adjustment, and from that opinion we see no reason for departing It will be well for mutual adjustment—the "shaking down" process—to have proceeded a certain way before this new responsibility is shouldered, this new complexity introduced into the relations of husband and wife

Let it be assumed, however, that the time has come

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\* 'Wise Wedlock,' Chapter \, page 127\_

when parenthood, once vaguely dreamed of, looms in the near future—an ordeal, a joy a task, the opening up of a whole realm of hitherto unknown experiences. It is a miracle that is about to come to pass but a miracle with a natural history and as surely as spiritual things are spiritually discerned, so surely physical things require physical discernment, and a knowledge—often woefully lacking—of plain and important facts. It is with these that we shall deal in the present and the following chapter.

The usual way of speaking of a woman expecting confinement is that she is "about to become a mother", we may begin by rejecting that inaccurate mode of expression, which conceals the essential fact that she has been a mother from the time when her child was conceived. Conception as the reader is aware, takes place when a male sperm cell reaches and penetrates a female ovum and thus fertilises it, renders it capable of development, and in coalescing with the ovum impresses upon the new being that is to be born many of the father's characteristics. Conception, it should be clearly understood, while of course *resulting* from intercourse, does not occur simultaneously with the act of union, but when it occurs at all, does so hours and possibly days after for even if a sperm-cell has entered the womb, actual fertilisation comes to pass as a rule *only after it has travelled further, making its way into one of the oviducts which connect the uterus with the ovaries.* It is there that—guided by an instinct which works with all the appearance of invincible purpose—it discovers the ovum which has floated thither after its liberation from the ovary, then these two—the ovum which has been waiting, and the sperm-cell which has been seeking it—become one, and presently the fertilised ovum will travel into the womb and attach itself to one

of its walls, there to remain and develop until, given normal conditions, the process is completed and the fully-formed child is born. From the moment of conception the state of pregnancy—and who says pregnancy says motherhood in its preliminary stages—has begun.

It will be our object in what follows, not to render a minute account of complex physiological processes, necessarily involving the use of many technical terms, but to afford guidance to the expectant mother during the all important period upon which she has now entered—guidance for the management of her own health, which stands in double need of constant, intelligent care both for her own sake and for that of the child she is to bear. That she should know, e.g., the precise stages of development through which the *fœtus* (unborn child) passes from month to month, may be, and doubtless is, interesting though hardly necessary, but that she should know in advance how to meet the physical and other changes which come over her, so as to be able to stand the fatigues of pregnancy and the pangs of childbirth in a state of fitness, is quite essential.

We have, it is true, advanced a long way since the ancient writer declared, "Thou knowest not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child." As a matter of fact we know all the stages of the child's growth, we can tell, e.g., that so early as in the fifth week of its embryonic life there are the beginnings of what will by and-by be eyes—that the nails of fingers and toes appear before three months have elapsed from the date of conception, that very shortly after that period the great decision has mysteriously taken place whether the child is to be a boy or a girl, that in the fifth month the formation of bony structure proceeds apace, and the child begins to make those movements which are known as "quickening." Thus we can trace step by step the perfecting of that "imperfect sub-

stance " spoken of by the Psalmist, that tiny body which will be ready to issue forth from its first cradle after two hundred and eighty days of " gestation," passing during its progress from the egg-cell to its fully developed state through an evolutionary process which, in the words of Haeckel, " is a brief, compressed reproduction of the long series of forms through which the animal ancestors of that organism have passed from the earliest periods of so called organic creation down to the present time " All this, we say, is full of interest and such knowledge may be profitably pursued, but within the limits of our space our aim must be the simpler one of laying down the indispensable rules observance of which will safeguard the health and lives of both mother and child

The sooner, of course, a woman knows that conception has actually taken place, the sooner she will be able to adapt her manner of life to the new condition she has entered, a condition which, without being at all " pathological," is yet accompanied by not a few minor and even major ailments. Sometimes, indeed, in exceptional cases, a woman is conscious—morally certain—almost on the instant of a certain undefinable change which has taken place within herself, and which tells her that she is not the same as before, but these subjective indications are naturally far from infallible, and especially where a woman dreads rather than welcomes the prospect of maternity, she will be apt to imagine all sorts of symptoms. There are two signs each of which, by itself, may be deceptive, but both of which, occurring together, may be taken as a pretty sure indication that conception has occurred. We are referring, on the one hand, to the non-appearance of the monthly period, and on the other to the disagreeable phenomenon generally described as morning sickness,

together with vertigo and a feeling of lassitude. As regards the former, this may be due to quite different causes, such as anæmia, pulmonary disease, or some passing local disturbance, and on the other hand every family doctor knows of cases where menstruation has continued for a month or two after the commencement of pregnancy. As regards morning sickness, again, it is an unreliable symptom if unaccompanied by the other, indeed, it may be—like a good deal of sea-sickness—self induced, the product of auto suggestion. Where, however, both phenomena—the objective and the subjective—are observed, there one would say with a fair amount of assurance that the woman has conceived, and must take measures accordingly. Even so, for the first three months one can as a rule speak only of strong presumptions rather than absolute certainties.

In many women the breasts begin to undergo alterations in size and appearance within the first month from the date of conception. Generally, however, these changes come to be noticeable only from the second month onward. The breasts become enlarged, and there is a feeling of fullness and tenderness, as nature is preparing them for their future task, the nipples, as well as the pink circle surrounding them, grow unmistakably darker in colour, and presently—often as early as in the second month—they will give forth some drops of milk-like fluid on gentle pressure being applied. A similar discoloration takes place in the lining of the vagina, which loses its pink appearance and takes on a bluish red colour, the outer lips at the entrance of the vagina become enlarged, while the vaginal passage itself widens, and the secretion of mucus grows more copious as pregnancy proceeds. Medical examination will easily detect numerous corresponding changes in the interior generative organs, while in the fifth month the mother will first become conscious of those fluttering movements

in her womb which express as it were the impatience of the unborn to enter this world, where so many strange experiences await him, and which he will greet with a wail.

We shall deal later on with subsequent phenomena of which it is well that a woman should know in advance, so as to be prepared; as soon, however, as there is a reasonable presumption of pregnancy, she will have to enter on a régime of hygiene, which we must now proceed to describe in some detail.

That regard for scrupulous physical cleanliness upon which we have had previous occasion to insist, now becomes doubly imperative. The utmost care must, of course, be taken lest any impurity should find its way into the internal organs, where it may easily set up every kind of septic mischief: we shall remember this important consideration at a later stage in the present chapter. Contrary to a widely-prevalent superstition, it is not only not injurious but highly salutary for the expectant mother to take frequent and regular baths all through the months of her pregnancy, and right down to the end of that period; the only point to bear in mind is that the temperature must be a medium one, agreeable to the body, and avoiding extremes either of heat or cold.\*

Just as an athlete training for a contest, so the expectant mother will need to pay special attention to everything that will ensure her fitness for the ordeal which awaits her—a fitness, as we shall see, not of the body only, but of the mind as well—and this in the double interests of herself and her child. As regard the body, three subjects demand her careful thought viz., clothing, exercise and diet.

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\* See, however, page 138, on very hot baths shortly before confinement



Without at all pampering herself, she will do well to see to it that her clothing maintains the body in an equable, comfortable warmth. She must avoid all articles of dress which exercise pressure or subject her to unnecessary fatigue. It is hardly necessary in these days to enter a warning against the wearing of numerous heavy underskirts, such as used to form an indispensable part of the toilet of bygone generations of women, adding cruelly to the weight already carried during pregnancy. The whole of the clothing should be loose-fitting, and not only belts but garters should be avoided, owing to their tendency to promote varicose veins, a trouble to which pregnant women are quite sufficiently prone without "asking for it." Suspenders must take the place of garters. If we do not dwell at any length upon the subject of corsets, it is because we are convinced that a woman who will not dispense with such a contrivance of her own accord during pregnancy will hardly be moved to do so by mere expert advice. We may just, in passing, state what ought not to need stating, viz., that the wearing of corsets by the expectant mother will make child birth unnecessarily difficult and dangerous, besides being incidentally a crime against her unborn child. It is highly desirable that skirts which are at all heavy should not press by their weight upon the hips, but be kept in position by means of braces, but one piece, slip on garments will probably be best. From the fourth month onward a good, well fitting abdominal belt should be worn for support, this will prove a source of great comfort at the time, and will prevent that loss of elasticity in the muscles of the abdomen which, once gone, so often fails to return, the result being a permanently unshapely, unsightly figure.

In turning to the subject of exercise during preg-

nancy, we are fully conscious that we may at once be met with the remark that for the majority of women, labouring at household tasks every day and often all day, and frequently overtaxed even at normal times, it is not the question of exercise but of how to obtain the minimum rest while they are awaiting yet another baby, that arises. That is of course, as true as it is lamentable, and it applies perhaps particularly to those married women who continue to be wage earners, often working in factories and laundries until shortly before their confinement. Our remarks do not apply to the systematically overdriven, nor to wives who are shown less consideration than a valuable domestic animal, but to the average middle-class woman we would say that it is good, and not bad, for her to keep herself supple and fit by doing a fair amount of work about the house down to almost the last day—without, needless to say, indulging in heavy exertion, standing on ladders or shifting furniture from one place to another. If her general health is satisfactory, she will be well advised to fight against the temptation to do a minimum, but remember that a time is coming when she will need all her muscular strength, and that strength is preserved and increased by being exercised. Labour will proceed more quickly and prove less exhausting if the muscles of the uterus are in good condition, and this, in turn, will depend upon the state of the muscular system as a whole. There are cases where, for special reasons, the doctor will prescribe a more or less complete abstention from work, but short of such a stringent injunction the expectant mother will act wisely in not treating herself, or allowing herself to be treated as an invalid, but as a normal human being going through a normal human experience. A walk, gentle and not too prolonged should be included in her daily routine, and she should bear in mind that her child will already benefit by all

the pure air she breathes, and be injured by the stale atmosphere of the crowded restaurant or cinema she may be so foolish as to frequent. A moderate amount of bodily exertion will have the further value of keeping her appetite and digestive organs in healthy condition.

Thus we are brought by a natural transition to the third of the subjects requiring the expectant mother's special care and attention viz, that of diet. Here we have first of all to combat the erroneous notion that a pregnant woman has to "eat for two" to consume a larger number of more substantial meals than usual. She will not benefit her child by such a course, and by adding quite unprofitably to its bulk she will almost certainly make the process of delivery more difficult and painful for herself. It is an utter mistake which makes people rejoice in an exceptionally "fine"—i.e., big—new born baby, mere size stands in no necessary relation to health and strength nor do huge infants invariably thrive the best. Let it be remembered that the baby has to make its way through a passage which at the best is a very narrow one and we shall see how great and dangerous a strain the exceptionally 'fine' baby throws upon his mother—who perhaps has directly contributed to that strain by following foolish advice and cramming herself with food like a patient at a sanatorium for consumptives. It should be her positive aim to keep the development of the child within manageable proportions its bony structure not too hard its body not too fat and this is to be effected by carefully regulating the quantity and choosing the quality of her food during pregnancy.

The average weight of a normal baby at birth should be about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lbs in the case of a boy or somewhat less in the case of a girl. Now if we distribute

this over the 280 days of gestation, it will be seen that the average daily increase in substance, derived from its mother, is very trifling indeed—considerably below half an ounce. Moreover it has to be borne in mind that during the ante natal period the baby loses no fraction of its nourishment—as does the child once it is born—through respiratory or excretory functions. To allege, therefore that the expectant mother requires largely-increased amounts of food is mere foolishness, by indulging in this manner she will not benefit her own health, but rather run the risk of so increasing the size of her child as to add appreciably to the pains and difficulties she must face at the time of its birth.

Let her accordingly not think it necessary to exceed the quantum of nourishment she is in the habit of consuming at ordinary times, and avoid anything like sheer repletion under the illusion that she is “feeding baby.” Furthermore, let her reduce as far as possible her consumption of foods containing phosphate of lime in large proportions, for this goes to form and harden the bony structure, and it is distinctly undesirable that the unborn baby's bones, especially its skull, should be other than soft and flexible, if its passage from the womb through the vaginal canal is to be a quick and easy one. *The more the bones of the foetus resemble gristle in substance, the less prolonged and painful will be the mother's trial.*

Meat should play a secondary part in the expectant mother's daily régime, which should be predominantly vegetarian, on the other hand, there ought to be a generous supply of fruit, both fresh and stewed, also of green vegetables and salads. Bread and butter, potatoes, and cereals generally—rice sago, etc.—should enter into the composition of the menu, while cocoa and beef tea will be found valuable.

—On the whole the consumption of drink should be

reduced as far as possible during the period of pregnancy, if only for the reason that an unrestricted indulgence in this respect may have the result of increasing to a very inconvenient extent the quantum of fluid, known as the 'bag of waters,' which accumulates in the womb to protect the child. What liquid is consumed to quench thirst had best take the form of fruit juices, especially home made lemonade, tea and still more coffee, should be only moderately partaken of, and alcohol not at all, unless the mother to be is prepared to instil poison into her child ere it is born. As has been aptly observed, let her ponder the meaning of the command laid upon the mother of Samson, at the time when the angel of the Lord prophesied that she was to conceive and bear a son. "Drink no wine nor strong drink and eat not any unclean thing, for the child shall be dedicated to God from the womb to the day of his death."

From the subject of bodily fitness during pregnancy, and how to maintain it, we turn to the no less important theme of the expectant mother's frame of mind her general condition in other than physical respects. If it is important for herself that she should await the coming ordeal in a serene quiet and hopeful state, it is doubly so for the new being ripening in the shelter of her womb, and daily influenced for good or ill by the mother whose life nourishes and builds up his own. Her condition while not pathological is abnormal, and the various discomforts aches and pains which she is called upon to endure will tend to induce a heightened irritability a frequent loss of emotional equilibrium, sometimes a tendency to depression and melancholia especially when she looks upon her coming experience with fear and misgiving. Commonsense will here dictate some quite obvious elementary rules, but since common

sense is a quality never to be assumed as a matter of course, we will say explicitly that the expectant mother must be saved, and must save herself, all forms of vehement excitement, all severe mental strain, everything that would profoundly stir up or harrow the emotions. It is quite untrue—let this be said in passing—that any sudden fright or “upset” will produce birth-marks or disfigurement of any kind in the baby’s body, but if she allows herself to dwell on such incidents, it may easily have the effect of leaving ineffaceable marks on the baby’s mind.

She should, generally speaking, “study to be quiet,” avoid shocks, abstain from visiting exciting spectacles of any kind, and from reading sensational fiction or newspaper reports of squalid misdoings; this is to feed the mind on garbage, a foolish and hurtful proceeding at any time, but doubly so when her mind is more than normally impressionable, and its impressions are being transmitted all the while, written in invisible-indelible characters on the most sensitive material in the world. It is really not in accordance with the fitness of things that while the fruit of her body is growing secretly, she knoweth not how, she should impregnate the precious soil with poison, saturating herself with the sordid details of Divorce Court trials, or the unwholesome “romances” that litter every bookstall. She is going to encounter new, sacred duties and responsibilities, and should prepare herself for their accomplishment with an enthusiasm not devoid of an element of awe. What she does, what she reads, what she thinks, what she is during these months will help to determine the bent of a whole life.

Her condition gives her a right to increased consideration, kindness and gentle care on the part of all her environment, but especially on the part of her husband, and this will rarely fail to be accorded to her, what she is passing through assuredly entitles her to

have her feelings studied in the larger and smaller details of daily life. The tender affection which is her due will lead him readily to condone even a passing whim or lapse of temper, caused by disturbances, apprehensions, nervous strain, which he—happily for himself—has no experience of, but should be able in some measure to divine, and which he should seek to mitigate. This, indeed, is his bare duty—to help his wife to the best of his ability through what is often a dreary and always an increasingly wearing stretch of time.

But there are in this world no rights or claims without corresponding duties, and to this law the case of the expectant mother forms no exception. While she may ask to be treated with more than ordinary indulgence by everyone else, there is one person by whom she must not on any account be indulged and petted, and that is *herself*. If she will determine to exercise a maximum of self-discipline if she refuses to be "mollied" if she systematically endeavours to restrain her temper, to exercise and maintain control over her nerves, to keep her mind away from her ailments as far as possible she will by so doing not only add immensely to her dignity and self-respect, but she will also endow her infant with precious qualities, which will stand him in good stead all through life. That a peevish, complaining, dissatisfied woman should have peevish, complaining, dissatisfied children is what we should expect, and often, if the truth were known, it would be found that the foundation of such an unattractive temperament which is a lifelong curse, has been laid during the ante natal period.

We recommended that the wife who is looking forward to the blessedness of holding a child in her arms should refrain from thoughts, reading, emotions that are apt to have an injurious influence upon the new life ripening within her, but that is only an elementary

precaution, a mere beginning. Not to sow tares on the good ground may be a very laudable principle, but it is not exactly the whole art of agriculture. We suggest that these months, and especially perhaps the latter period, when she can no longer take her full wonted share in the work of her household, might be utilised by the expectant mother far more than is usually the case, in a conscious effort to cultivate her mind and character, to live as consistently as may be on a high level of thought and feeling, she should seek the companionship of exalted spirits in literature, feast her eye on what is lovely in art, listen to good music, in a word, give her soul a chance to take deep breaths of the spiritual oxygen that means more life and fuller not for herself only, but for her child. It is not to be imagined that a woman who has dwelt during those truly formative months in the realm of noble and beautiful emotions, who has nourished herself on some of the permanent glories in which our English literature is so rich, whose eyes have gazed on beautiful scenery or paintings, does not by so doing instil something of all this into the nascent mind and soul of the child she is bearing.

We may be depicting an ideal, but if so, it is surely one worth striving after. To have foreshaped the mentality of the newcomer in advance for good, to have caused him to enter the world with an inborn taste for whatsoever things are true, just, pure, lovely, of good report, is so immense a privilege that one rather marvels it should not be more widely exercised. To have the finest material in the world and to have it in a state so plastic that it may be modelled with the utmost ease this, which is the sculptor's dream, is the possibility actually presented to the woman about to bring a child into the world.



And what of the expectant *father*? The reader may be startled by an uncommon phrase, we coin it for the express purpose of emphasising as sharply as possible a thought that was already expressed in an earlier chapter of this book

A thoughtful man ought not to content himself with the merely incidental share which physical nature somewhat contemptuously assigns to him in the procreation of his child, it should be his dearest ambition to become its parent, in the true sense, almost as much as its mother will have the right to that title. It should not be the case that he has "had his pleasure, done his part," and that there the matter ends for him, rather, for him, too, the months intervening between conception and birth should be months of expectancy, in which he will enter into a deeper, more unselfishly loving communion with his wife than either of them has ever known before. They may now have the joy of working together at the high and holy task of giving their child a predisposition towards sweetness and light, a taste for the noble pleasures of the mind, a natural leaning towards ways of gentleness and peace. They can shield him, ere he is born, from much evil by endowing him with a native love of good, they can protect him from the defiling touch of the world before he has entered it, they can dedicate him to the service of his kind while he is still slumbering in his mother's womb

If they do this, or so far as they endeavour to do this work jointly, they will have the right also to join in the pæan, "Unto us a child is born"

any animal species to allow herself to be approached by a male, and cite numerous instances among nations of the ancient and the modern world where sexual relations with a pregnant woman are forbidden by custom.

To this it may be not unreasonably replied that what obtains in the animal creation is not necessarily to be taken as a guide for human beings to follow, and that even the laws of the ancient Medes and Persians, or of the modern Ashantis and Basutos, cannot be held binding upon us, but must be considered on their merits. As it is, we have seen cause to dissent from the idea that marriage and the marital function serve exclusively the aim of producing offspring; such a view lowers human marriage to the sub-human, the animal level, and its acceptance does away with all that ennobles and gives dignity to the life partnership between man and woman. It is each other they supremely desire, in each other that they seek and find supreme satisfaction: the wish for children may supervene or be subconsciously present from the beginning, but it neither is nor ought to be the one motive which has brought them together.

Conjugal intercourse serves a three-fold end, and is to be regarded under a three-fold aspect. It is the means for bringing children into the world under circumstances conducive to their receiving the best care and protection; it gives its legitimate satisfaction to one of the most imperious physical instincts; and it acquires, when exercised between wedded lovers, a unique emotional and spiritual value and complexion, becoming not a mere act of physical gratification, but a perfect expression of mutual surrender, affection and communion.

That being so, shall we say that when the first of these ends has been attained for the time being, *i.e.*, when a child has been conceived, the other two become

## CHAPTER VIII

## EXPECTANT MOTHERHOOD

*(Continued)*

We ended the previous chapter by discussing what, if any, was to be the husband's and prospective father's function during his child's pre natal period, and we must begin the present one by dealing with a different aspect of the same question

There is no avoiding this particular aspect of the matter, and we shall even have to consider it in some detail, viz, the desirability or otherwise of continued conjugal relations once pregnancy has been unmistakably established. The subject is one which looms large in married life, and that for comprehensible reasons. It has to be viewed not only from two standpoints—that of the wife and the husband—but from a third and highly important one, i e, the welfare of the child, and it may be said at once that opinion is much divided on the issue, which yet every married couple, once fertilisation has taken place, is called upon to decide for itself. Cause enough then, for a careful and dispassionate survey of a somewhat complicated case.

Those who look upon marital intercourse as solely serving the object of procreation, will naturally postulate that, the one purpose which makes such intercourse permissible having been attained, conjugal relations should forthwith cease and be resumed only if and when another child is desired. They will point out that it is the exception for the impregnated female of

any animal species to allow herself to be approached by a male, and cite numerous instances among nations of the ancient and the modern world where sexual relations with a pregnant woman are forbidden by custom

To this it may be not unreasonably replied that what obtains in the animal creation is not necessarily to be taken as a guide for human beings to follow, and that even the laws of the ancient Medes and Persians, or of the modern Ashantis and Basutos, cannot be held binding upon us but must be considered on their merits. As it is we have seen cause to dissent from the idea that marriage and the marital function serve exclusively the aim of producing offspring, such a view lowers human marriage to the sub human the animal level, and its acceptance does away with all that ennobles and gives dignity to the life partnership between man and woman. It is each other they supremely desire in each other that they seek and find supreme satisfaction the wish for children may supervene or be subconsciously present from the beginning but it neither is nor ought to be the one motive which has brought them together.

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That being so shall we say that when the first of these ends has been attained for the time being, i e, when a child has been conceived, the other two become

negligible, and that intimate relations between husband and wife should be suspended? There is no un-mistakable law human or divine to decide this issue for us in the affirmative or negative and as we have seen it is one of unusual complexity

Let us regard the matter first of all from the husband's point of view precisely because he is in this particular matter the less important partner. The strength of his sex instincts is not miraculously diminished, still less do these instincts disappear, when his wife becomes an expectant mother, he has perhaps been only recently married, and scarcely entered into his lawful and blameless conjugal joys. Naturally the idea of a prolonged abstinence from these prized satisfactions is the reverse of welcome to him. And what he feels conscious of may not be just crude appetite he may well have discovered in conjugal union with his wife that outward expression of a spiritual oneness of which we spoke a paragraph or two back, and be aghast at the prospect of that close bond being broken for many months. If we are sensible we shall not deny him a measure of sympathy, and recognise that if he is to be deprived of his privileges it must be only for a sound and valid reason and only for so long a time as appears really warranted.

We are, of course not thinking of the animal type of man sometimes met with, who regards his wife's pregnancy as affording him positive licence for unbridled indulgence since "nothing can now happen beyond what has already happened," we can only express our unbounded pity for the woman subject to the appetites of the married sensualist who is apt to be the worst of all and to claim his "dues" as one who has the sanction of Church and State for pressing and even enforcing his demands.

We turn next to the case of the wife—so often

hardly used to her new status as a married woman before she finds that she has to face motherhood as well. Now we have already made a general statement with regard to the average woman's sex-life, to the effect that while she is capable, if deeply stirred, of transports no less vivid than her husband's in the act of union, she is far less disposed to experience a sense of deprivation if conjugal relations have to be suspended even for a considerable length of time. The reasons for this difference we have previously explained, and nature, in designing woman's organism, has so contrived that she is capable of finding a high degree of satisfaction in caresses, tender words and glances, manifestations of affection, which leave man far from satisfied, while she wonders that he should want—really and urgently want—more of her than she of him. Thus a period of abstinence from the conjugal rite, if such should be necessary, will trouble her less than him, unless, as a good and understanding wife may, she troubles for his sake, the only question is, Does the necessity exist?

To this the answer is, Certainly, during the last three months of pregnancy at least, when her condition makes union so inconvenient that it may gravely endanger both her and her child, neither, apart from these vital considerations, should æsthetic ones be altogether left out of sight. We repeat without any hesitation our former statement, that a husband has no occasion to consider himself a martyr because for such a minimum period he is denied access to his wife, and the sooner he learns that marriage is among other things, a school of self-restraint—self-restraint which is as little impossible for the wedded as for the single—the better for himself. There exists, it is true, a debased type of man who makes the times when his wife cannot "be a wife to him" an occasion and excuse for infidelities, no comment on such vileness could be

sufficiently scathing though of its existence there can be, unhappily no doubt

But what of the earlier phases of the wife's expectant motherhood? We have said that she will not appreciably miss conjugal intercourse, if its total cessation between conception and confinement should be decreed it becomes, then altogether a question of whether intercourse is safe or injurious for her and the child she is bearing. Now here we may, with due caution say that it would perhaps in all cases be safer for her to be spared marital relations during the whole of that time on the ground that she will be best without any violent emotional strain or nervous excitement such as may easily cause her to have a miscarriage. If this is the case where the woman is in good general health it applies doubly where she is below par, where there is a predisposition to pulmonary trouble or where there is reason to believe that the heart is not quite sound, in all such instances the aim should be to avoid all extra excitement of any kind, sexual excitement as much as any other because it is liable to aggravate any trouble already existing and thus to render her less fit than she otherwise would be for the trial which lies ahead of her. There are, indeed authorities who deprecate intercourse with a pregnant woman *in toto*, as being always charged with some element of risk, viz, the risk of septic poisoning or some inner lesion and resulting miscarriage.

We must however, have regard for the urgencies—perhaps even the infirmities—of average human nature and deal with things as they are. Now there can be no doubt that to debar a youthful and vigorous husband from all marital relations with his wife for so prolonged a stretch of time would impose upon him some real hardship, and possibly subject him to a severe temptation to find elsewhere what he was denied at home, for

that matter, we believe that most wives, having gained some insight into the intensity of their husband's sex-needs, would be reluctant, from simple affection, to deprive them of satisfaction for any longer spell or in any greater measure than was absolutely necessary for reasons of health.

We suggest, therefore, a *via media* or compromise, as follows. Provided always that the wife is neither constitutionally weak nor exceptionally troubled by the ailments incidental to pregnancy—of which more will presently have to be said—intercourse may be resorted to up to, and perhaps including, the sixth month, but *much more sparingly than at ordinary times*, and even this reduced frequency should steadily diminish, i.e., the occasions should be separated by lengthening intervals. Nor is this all. In direct contrast to what we have elsewhere advised as the procedure generally to be followed, these acts of union during pregnancy must be preceded by none of the wooing, the lover like endearments on the husband's part, that are calculated to rouse his wife's emotions and render her responsive to his embrace. Here the object is the exact opposite, viz., to keep her quiescent and passive—the less she is stirred to excitement the better for her and her child. That the husband, too, will restrain his own passion rather than yield to it, and use the utmost gentleness, should hardly require to be said.

After the sixth month, at latest, conjugal intercourse should cease absolutely. There is always a risk of some harmful germ being introduced into the organs of the expectant mother, and for this reason extra care and cleanliness are to be exercised even during the earlier period of her pregnancy. A remark in the author's earlier volume, *Wise Wedlock*, having apparently puzzled some readers, this may be a suitable opportunity for explaining it. It was said there, on



page 90 "A wife who tenderly loves the father of her unborn child will not wish to subject him to an undue strain by depriving him of access to her for a longer time than is absolutely imperative, knowing something of his physical necessities and the outlet they seek after and even when complete connection is not practicable, or to grant it would be injudicious, love will find a way. The meaning was simply that even without actual union the close and loving embrace of husband and wife will probably prove adequate for giving him the same relief which comes involuntarily to the unmarried man (Cp Chap III p 42)

We may supplement what we have said concerning the suspension of conjugal relations during the latter phase of pregnancy by stating that for at least six weeks after even a normally easy confinement attended by no complications, the same abstinence *must* be practised and that it would be far better if that period was considerably extended, until the delicate parts which have undergone so severe a strain have had time to heal completely and the whole organism has readjusted itself. There are, indeed those who deprecate any resumption of married intercourse during all the time that a mother nurses her baby i.e., for the greater part of a year, but we do not think that any good object is served by giving such counsels of perfection and would merely say that during lactation too strong sexual and other excitement is best avoided by the mother lest her milk should deteriorate in quality or alter so as to injure the baby's health. During the months of

nursing a baby—a possibility which ought under all circumstances to be guarded against, since nothing is so sure to undermine a woman's health as a number of confinements in quick succession

We must now give some further account of the phenomena accompanying the progress of pregnancy, and if such an account is, as must be feared, little more than the enumeration of a series of discomforts it may at any rate be urged that with wise management these discomforts may be materially diminished that the end of them is always in sight and that they find their compensation, and are even mercifully forgotten, when the baby makes its appearance

As the unborn child develops the womb enlarges, gradually rising and pressing forward when it is stated that this organ grows between conception and childbirth to twenty four times its normal size it will be understood how severely it presses on all the other organs around it as well as against the wall of the abdomen. The skin of the latter, as the pregnancy progresses, is stretched to such an extent as in many instances to give rise to small horizontal streaks due to tiny tears in the tissue these are visible and remain permanently so even after the confinement has taken place an unmistakable and indelible mark of the event. The pressure exercised by the womb and its contents upon the bladder causes a desire for the frequent relief of that organ the rectum too is apt to feel the effects of the womb's continued growth somewhat acutely and constipation frequently ensues. The stomach becomes unable to hold its normal quantity of food for which reason large meals are to be discountenanced, and the legs often swell or varicose veins develop as the blood is unable to circulate as freely as under ordinary conditions, and becomes congested in the lower extremities

As if all this were not sufficient, the expectant mother is unusually liable to be troubled with toothache and neuralgia, while a minor inconvenience often noted is a tendency—especially if she be an anæmic subject—to increased and even excessive secretion of saliva.

This may, indeed, seem a dreary catalogue of ailments to be borne even before the hour of supreme trial possibly of danger to life itself, and it behoves every husband to treat the wife who is "bearing the burden of Eve" with a tender, chivalrous consideration—even a forbearance—which will be the more readily forthcoming if he has learned in advance something of the multitudinous troubles her condition will bring upon her. If he asks himself daily how he can make up to her for what are, after all, the consequences of his doing—often of what she has granted only to his urgent desire—his duty in that respect will become clearer to him. Let him understand how infinitely harder is the woman's part and instead of callously contenting himself with the reflection that this is nature's way, let him so far as possible step in and lighten the heavy burden which nature imposes on womanhood. Every small act of thoughtfulness, every wise exercise of patience when her nerves make her irritable, every cheerful, kindly word spoken when she is inclined to depression, will prove immensely helpful, indeed, a husband may greatly aid his wife to bear a trying period with a stout heart, and thus to meet the actual ordeal with a minimum of physical exhaustion or mental misgiving. How greatly she herself may contribute to that eminently desirable end by practising self-mastery and diverting her mind from the troubles of the body to other interests, we have tried to indicate in the preceding chapter.

There is one subject which should be glanced at in this connection, viz., the strange "fancies"—often for unusual or highly spiced kinds of food—to which

many women are prone while awaiting confinement. How these cravings arise would be difficult to explain satisfactorily; all we can say is that, so long as they do not become morbid or exceed the bounds of what is reasonable, there will be no harm in gratifying such a passing fancy on the part of one who can do with a little gentle "humouring." At the same time the expectant mother will be well advised to keep a good hold upon herself, to set limits to her desires, and to be the first to say "No" when they take irrational or unwholesome forms; a self-indulgent mother-to-be "makes"—in the most literal sense—a self-indulgent, unmanageable child, just as a worrying, fretful mother-to-be positively creates the same characteristics in her unborn offspring.

We shall now ask ourselves what can be done to make a woman's physical condition during pregnancy less burdensome to herself, and how best to prepare her for the stress she must presently undergo.

The sickness, which is amongst the first symptoms that conception has taken place, happily disappears in most cases from the time when the quickening begins to manifest itself, *i.e.*, about the fifth month. Either hot fomentations or cold-water compresses applied to the abdomen may be tried with good effect, while so simple a remedy as a drink of milk and soda will often allay the feeling of nausea—stopping short of actual sickness, but quite sufficiently distressing—which so often manifests itself first thing in the morning. The opinion, by the way, is often expressed, and apparently based on experience, that it is the *absence* of sickness during the earlier months following conception rather than its occurrence, that is to be dreaded; the final stages will be all the easier, it is held, if the first ones have been marked by this disturbance—a hopeful view,

which it will at any rate not hurt us to hold. If sickness is very severe and especially if it does not disappear during the later months the family doctor should be called in, he may then either prescribe suitable drugs—which we shall not name as this is distinctly not a case where ‘the patient must minister to herself’—or perform the necessarily delicate operation of expanding the neck of the womb, though he may feel that this should only be a last resort.

The tendency to constipation is best corrected by a suitable diet. We have already stated that fruit either fresh or stewed, should hold a chief place in the expectant mother's daily régime and where this advice is followed where green vegetables and salads are staple items, constipation will be less liable to prove troublesome, or will be more easily overcome. Orange, lemon or lime juice diluted in water, and drunk as a morning libation, are to be recommended, stewed figs or prunes eaten in the morning will often produce the desired result while some advise that a few leaves of senna be tied up in muslin and placed with the prunes or figs in stewing. Massage of the stomach, the use of cascara tablets, aperient table waters like Hunyadi Janos a little glycerine swallowed night and morning, or injections of soapy water into the anus—these are some of the familiar remedies one or the other of which should cause the bowels to act with the *desired regularity*; in any case a determined effort must be made to prevent the continued accumulation of waste matter in the intestines.

Varicose veins are a troublesome and painful complaint which, curiously enough, is more often the accompaniment of later pregnancies than of the first. We have described how it arises, viz, through the obstacle placed by the much enlarged womb in the way of the blood's free circulation and return from the lower ex-

tremities, where it distends the veins. As soon as a tendency to this ailment is observed it is necessary to rest as much as possible, with the feet up, should the case require further measures, the doctor will doubtless order either bandages or the wearing of an elastic stocking, but rest, taken in time and in sufficient measure, will often prove effective by itself, and must in any case be resorted to.

A good deal of the toothache which is the special bane of the expectant mother would be avoided if she were to consult a dentist in the earliest stages of her pregnancy, and to have her teeth carefully overhauled, it is then rather than later, when she will be less able to bear any shock, that a hopelessly bad tooth should be taken out, and any other that shows signs of decay should be stopped. Uniform experience shows that even a slightly decayed tooth will go rapidly worse during pregnancy, and thus unless she takes time by the forelock and has the necessary extractions and stoppings executed in good time, the chances are that not only will she be put to much unnecessary suffering through toothache, but her digestion also will suffer, owing to her inability to masticate properly, and through the septic matter from the affected tooth reaching the stomach. The pangs of prolonged toothache are particularly wearing, and whatever exhausts and undermines the mother's strength reacts injuriously upon her child. It is, of course, well to pay regular visits to the dentist in any case, for such a periodic inspection will prolong the life of the teeth, and do much to prevent a whole variety of ailments with which we pay for the neglect of this precaution, but even where such *regular* attention has not been previously given to this important matter, there should be no delay once pregnancy is clearly indicated.

The wise expectant mother will assuredly not be *idly* expectant. There are multitudes of details to be seen to, and if she is able to make the little garments for the expected arrival herself her mind as well as her hands will be happily employed—indeed, her thoughts will be directed upon the most joyful aspect of what the future has in store for her the time when the tedium and stress will be over and her child safely brought forth, will rest safely in her arms. But over and above all other details that claim her time and care, she will be ceaselessly at work upon herself fitting herself for the climax of the confinement and for the new duties which await her thereafter. We have spoken of the way in which she may work upon the material of her own mind, and thus upon that of her baby, practising what may be truly called a kind of "creative evolution," but she may also prepare her body in such a way as to render the baby's entrance into the world easier.

We have already referred to the desirability of frequent baths throughout the period of pregnancy. As the confinement draws near, the bath may be made to contribute directly to a safe and easy delivery, viz., in the form of hip baths which should be taken as hot as possible, and cover the abdomen, the thighs and the back up to the waist. This will have the effect of making the body soft and pliable, in which condition labour will become materially easier. Care must be taken to guard against colds and the expectant mother be kept well covered up with an old cape or blanket, and fresh supplies of very hot water—as hot as she can stand—must be added from time to time.

Just as the lower part of the body needs to be thus prepared for its task, so those sensitive organs the breasts, must be prepared for theirs which will be more continuous and of vital importance to boot. A mixture suitable for the double purpose of hardening the breasts,

and especially the nipples should be made, consisting in equal parts of some spirit like Eau de Cologne and glycerine or olive oil with this the nipples should be rubbed every day for at least three months previous to the expected date of the confinement while the breasts as a whole should be bathed with it. If the nipples are flattened down they must be gently drawn out each day *plenty of friction for which purpose we recommend a clean rubber sponge*, will prepare them for the rather energetic usage they are likely to receive once a hungry baby has made his appearance

Thus the days and months pass and the period of expectancy draws near its close, amid feelings now of apprehension now of impatience now with a sense of relief that "the worst will soon be over," and "the best is yet to be." By this time a question which has all along loomed large becomes a burning one indeed—the question "When?" No exact answer is possible and many a time prophecies made confidently on the basis of some calculation prove to be considerably "out." If the first symptoms of quickening the first independent movements of the *fœtus* have been correctly observed and timed it will be safe to date the birth four months and a half from that event. The method of calculation recommended by Mrs Margaret Stephens and Dr Anna Fischer Dückelmann is the following—"Take the first day of the last menstruation add seven days to it and count backward three months or forward nine months. Thus if the first menstrual day were August 10th the probable day of confinement would be about May 17th in the following year if the first day were March 1st the confinement would be about December 8th. When February is included in the months two more days must be added to the date, or should it be leap year, only one more."



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## CHAPTER IX.

## FERTILITY AND STERILITY.

In an earlier chapter of this book we expressed the view that "what the man desires primarily is a wife; what the woman desires is a child: in order that that legitimate desire of each may be legitimately fulfilled, they marry. . . . On his part, union is the end sought, and sought with intensity and determination—on hers it is less an end than a means toward what is for her the real end, the procreation of a child, which will always be 'hers,' infinitely more than his." On these propositions we must at this point enlarge a little.

In maintaining that they are true of normal people, we do not at all mean to deny that women as a sex may and do desire marital relations for their own sake, nor to suggest that the parental instinct is all but absent in men. Many a single woman, "chaste but warm," might truthfully say of herself what Mr. Masfield, in *Reynard the Fox*, says of one of his well-observed characters, viz., that "she was not glad to be a maid," but consciously missed the satisfactions which marriage would have brought her; while there is also an essentially manly type of man, to which we have already made reference—the man for whom the love of a woman always takes the form of an intense wish for a child of hers that shall call him father. Nevertheless, as a general statement, it is hardly open to doubt that the average man finds his sufficient complement in woman, while the average woman, however happy in the

It forms no part of our plan to describe the processes of labour, or to give a detailed account of the course of a confinement, our object has been to tell the expectant mother rather what she is to do, in the interests of her own and her baby's welfare, than what she is merely to undergo. Let her have courage and confidence to the last, look on the bright prospect of motherhood, keep as unflustered and serene as she can until the decisive hour, when the trained midwife and the trusted family physician—armed, if possible, with an anæsthetic—will step in and take charge. In merciful unconsciousness, if her general health permit, let what must be done take place; and when she comes to, safely delivered of her precious burden, an "expectant" mother no longer, but a mother indeed, utterly weak yet utterly blessed in the possession of her babe, let her utter her Magnificat, and let the infant be fittingly adored. *"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world."*

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The reader is referred to the following works —

- "Sexual Physiology," by R. T. Trall, M.D., Chapter VII, "Pregnancy," and Chapter IX, "Parturition"  
 "Matrimony," by Monr Baird, Chapter VII, "The Waiting Time," and Chapter VIII, "By Their Fruits"

possession of a loved husband, feels incomplete without a child, and suffers from the non-fulfilment of motherhood incomparably more than a man from the non-fulfilment of his potential fatherhood.

A man whose marriage has remained childless "wishes there was a bairn;" but his wife will consume herself with fretting, or give way to passionate grief, as the years pass and no babe leaps in her womb. The late Stephen Phillips, with his almost uncanny insight into feminine psychology, expressed all the vehement, hopeless longing of the barren woman when he placed this outburst upon the lips of Lucrezia:

Bitterness—am I bitter? Strange, O strange!  
 How else? My husband dead, and childless left,  
 My thwarted woman thoughts have inward turned,  
 And that vain milk like acid in me eats  
 Have I not in my thought trained little feet  
 To venture, and taught little lips to move  
 Until they shaped the wonder of a word?  
 I am long practised O those children, mine!  
 Mine, doubly mine, and yet I cannot touch them,  
 I cannot see them, hear them Does great God  
 Expect I shall clasp air and kiss the wind  
 For ever? And the budding cometh on,  
 The burgeoning, the cruel flowering,  
 At night the quickening splash of rain, at dawn  
 That muffled call of birds how like to babes,  
 And I amid these sights and sounds must starve—  
 I, with so much to give perish of thirst,  
 Omitted by His casual dew!  
 I am a woman and this very flesh  
 Demands its natural pangs, its rightful throes,  
 And I implore with vehemence these pains

Here a true poet has made vocal the innermost truth—that woman, above everything else, is meant to be a mother.

And yet motherhood is, in the nature of things, beyond the reach of those millions of women whose number is in excess of that of the men in every country; and while, as we said, they can bear the deprivation of sexual intercourse far more easily than men, yet the

deprivation of what is the crown of wifehood, viz , motherhood, bears very hardly both upon the single woman and the childless wife—" and that vain milk like acid in them eats Those harshnesses, unamiabilities, fits of spleen, etc , which we occasionally associate with the spinster—all that the popular saying sums up in the words, " Unkist, unkind "—attests principally the tragedy of " thwarted woman thoughts " turned inward and become unsweet

Now not all women are physically capable of motherhood, and of those who are, and who marry, not all meet with mates who are capable of awakening the germ of life which slumbers within them We must therefore render ourselves some account of the phenomena of fertility and sterility, and what are the main causes of either

Woman's capacity for conceiving extends, roughly speaking from about her sixteenth to nearly her fiftieth year, which, let it be clearly understood, is not at all equivalent to saying that very early or very late motherhood is at all to be desired, for it is obvious that the organism of a girl in her teens is insufficiently adapted for the great physical strain of pregnancy and childbirth, while the woman in the later forties is past the zenith of her physical powers Experience seems to show that it is the girl who marries round about twenty-five—the bride of the poet's " sweet and twenty "—whose hopes of children will tend to be most quickly and most surely realised, especially if her husband is a few years older than herself, they are then both at their best from the point of view of potential parenthood, and will seldom have long to wait—provided both are in good health—for the arrival of the first baby The girl who becomes a wife when she is past thirty is, as a rule, less liable to conceive quickly, and the same has

been maintained, but more doubtfully, concerning marriages contracted when the bride is under twenty. We are bound to state that in our experience it is not at all unusual—we only wish it were—to find the "child wife" become a mother, while the unmarried mother of seventeen and even less is a woefully familiar phenomenon.

Where, however, the birth-rate is high, there as a rule we find the compensating phenomenon of a high infantile death rate, which we may attribute very largely to economic causes, the difficulty of providing adequately for a rapidly increasing family, and the impossibility of exercising sufficient care and oversight over a too-numerous brood. Thus, while statistics showed that in France there were 2,660 births per 100,000 inhabitants, as compared with Prussia's 3,910 per 100,000, yielding a Prussian surplus of 1,250, it was found that after five years 1,911 of the French babies survived, compared with 2,634 for Prussia, which reduces Prussia's original surplus from 1,250 to 723, or little more than half. It would thus seem that even in the matter of procreation you reach what economists call a "margin of diminishing returns," as shown by the survival rate. The same results have shown themselves under widely varying conditions of climate and nationality, a high (unchecked) fertility being accompanied by a proportionately high rate of mortality among the infants issuing in an unending stream. Dr Halliday G. Sutherland, an ardent advocate of unchecked procreation, can be taken as an unprejudiced witness when he tells us that the birth rate is "high amongst the less intelligent classes, and low amongst the most capable families"—i.e., it is highest among the shiftless and thriftless, the improvident strata of the population; when this same writer,

a zealous Catholic, points out that in 1914 the birth-rate among Catholics in ten selected centres was 38·6 per 1,000, as against 24 per 1,000 amongst the whole population of England and Wales,\* he seems to be hardly aware of the inference he invites

What is quite certain is that a high degree of fertility benefits the community only where the children, once born, can be maintained in such a degree of comfort—well nourished, well-clad, well-cared for—as will give them a fair chance of survival, to produce, say, a dozen children, and to bury five or more of their number, is sheer wastefulness

Age, food, climate, season—all these are factors influencing fertility. As regards the first of these, it is sometimes forgotten that the ages of *both* partners must be taken into consideration, and that it would be, e.g., misleading to say simply that a woman is at the zenith of her child-bearing capacity in her early thirties, so she is, but whether that capacity will result in her having a family will depend, among other things, upon the age of her husband, who may be strikingly younger or strikingly older than his wife, in which case her potential fertility may yet produce only disappointing results

As regards food, it is thought that a diet in which rather fish or potatoes or rice is largely represented is more favourable to ensuring fertility than where meat is consumed in large quantities, thus, e.g., India and China, with a practically vegetarian, rice-eating population, are lands where the cradle is never allowed to stand empty—though probably other factors beside diet are responsible for this condition of things, in China especially, where religion powerfully reinforces the desire for a swarming progeny to pay homage to their ancestors

On the other hand, we may say with certainty that drug like alcohol, opium, morphia and the like tend to produce barrenness in their devotees yet another reason why women will be well advised to resist the foolish counsel to dose themselves with medicated wines or "invalid stout"

Again judging from the number of births at certain times in the year, it would seem that liability to conceive is relatively highest in early summer and again about December, whilst it is matter of common knowledge that in every month a woman will be most likely to be impregnated during the days immediately preceding and following menstruation

We have already stated (Chap IV, p 65) that marriages between near relatives show a much higher proportion of sterility than the average, exemplifying in an acute form the law that the best marriages are those contracted between people who, without being in any way antagonistic or temperamentally incompatible, nevertheless exhibit sufficiently marked differences, alike of physique and in general characteristics

It is often contended and it seems *a priori* probable that women endanger their chances of future motherhood by an over-enthusiastic devotion either to sports or to intellectual pursuits, as regards the latter, however, we should be inclined to think that the infertile marriages of many University and professional women are due to deliberate choice rather than to acquired sterility

Where however, a marriage remains childless in spite of the fact that children are eagerly, maybe desperately, desired—and this is true of a proportion estimated at ten per cent—it is an entire mistake to attribute the cause, as is still generally done, necessarily to the wife and to her alone To begin with, there



is such a thing as sexual incompatibility, which prevents just this particular woman from being fertilised by this particular man. For some obscure but irremovable cause, it is written that these two should produce no offspring though the same woman might have become a mother had she married some other man and the same man might have become a father of children by another woman. There need be no such thing as sex antipathy between them \* it is simply nature pronouncing her verdict that from her point of view these two persons ought not to have married and where the desire for offspring remains thus frustrated for a number of years there might be a good *prima facie* case for the dissolution of a marriage which has proved a failure.

But in the second place the husband may be the sole cause of his wife never reaching the longed for goal of motherhood he may be either impotent, or sterile himself or the cause of sterility in her. Let us carefully distinguish between these categories.

By a man's impotence we mean his inability to perform the marital function successfully, to carry intercourse to its proper end by ejaculating sperm-cells into the female organs. This, as we saw in an earlier chapter, may be due to psychic causes to exaggerated diffidence when he first approaches his wife, and to his intense chagrin finds that his organs fail him, such psychic or emotional impotence is not altogether rare in young husbands but it generally disappears after a short time and conjugal relations ensue in due course. Very different as already stated and far harder to cure is the impotence which is really sexual neurasthenia caused by a weakening of the whole sex apparatus.

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\* On the other hand it is unfortunately the case that a woman may bear children to a man to whose embrace she submits \* \* \* by no means emotional or even, physical repugnance.

through excessive indulgence, usually in the form of masturbation (self abuse) Here the results manifest themselves in an inability to produce a proper erection, or in premature ejaculation i.e., before penetration has been effected, an excessively distressing experience for the husband, and ultimately for the wife also who finds herself stimulated to the point of desire for union but denied the satisfaction for which she is ready Where such impotence proves incurable, the wife is not left entirely without a remedy, should she choose to avail herself of it It is entirely shocking to the moral sense that a healthy young woman, splendidly equipped for wifehood and motherhood should find herself fettered for life in a joyless union to an exhausted voluptuary, and our matrimonial law—in many ways so blind and deaf to human needs—is in this instance wise and humane enough to provide that where a marriage has remained demonstrably unconsummated through the refusal or inability of either party, it may be annulled

What, however, is of far more frequent occurrence than masculine impotence, is masculine sterility, that is to say, although a man is capable of performing the conjugal act, the sperm cells he ejaculates are infertile This infertility may be congenital, but the fact has to be stated and faced that far more often it is the result of disease The testicles may be affected, e.g., by consumption, much more frequently, however, the sperm cells have been deprived of their fertilising quality as the result of imperfectly cured or latent gonorrhœa, and it is the horrible peculiarity of this persistent poison in the system that it not only causes sterility in the guilty party, viz., the man, but transfers it, together with all manner of fell and painful diseases—such as, e.g., catarrh of the cervix, or neck of the womb—to his innocent wife

This subject, the relation of gonorrhœa to childlessness, is of such importance that we must needs devote

little more space to it. Gonorrhœa is a very common and highly infectious venereal disease, and may be transferred from individual to individual by the mere contact of mucous membrane with the poisonous secretions characteristic of the malady. A patient may to all appearance have been cured, and yet the poison may lurk in his system for years in a latent form, ready to be passed on to another in the act of sexual intercourse. A man who has once contracted gonorrhœa must under no circumstances marry until repeated examination has convinced a specialist that the poison has left no trace whatever in the ex patient, unless it has been entirely eliminated, it will without fail infect and ruin the health of his wife, more especially destroying her capacity for child bearing.

If a woman so infected bears children at all, the chances are that they, in turn will suffer infection in the very process of birth, the poison producing ophthalmia, which often results in total and incurable blindness, indeed an exceedingly large proportion of all cases of blindness—put by some authorities as high as 25 per cent—is due to this cause alone. The disciples' question to Christ, "Who did sin this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" had thus more of an *a priori* justification than the general reader is conscious of, seeing how many sufferers are born blind because one of the parents had sinned before his child's birth and sinned even more grievously in giving him life at all. As for sterility resulting from gonorrhœa, it has been calculated by a German statistician that his country lost annually the enormous number of 220,000 children who otherwise would have been born. How important, then—shall we not say, how indispensable—that the man who asks a pure girl to confide her whole future to him, should be required to furnish a medical certificate declaring him free from venereal disease! A thousand

times better face honourable spinsterhood than fall into the hands of a man unscrupulous enough to incur the risk, amounting to a certainty of contaminating his wife, robbing her of all joy in life and dooming her either to sterility or to a motherhood worse than childlessness. The law very rightly, finds the infection of one partner by the other with venereal disease sufficient ground for granting a divorce, but the law ought to go a step further and insist on making marriages which must result in such infection illegal and thus impossible from the start.

In women as well as in men we have to discriminate between sterility proper, i.e., an incapacity to be fertilised, and what would be more correctly described as impotence, viz., an inability to have proper conjugal relations. The latter may be due to a variety of causes, fortunately as a rule not irremovable. Such a cause may be found in the abnormal toughness of the hymen, offering an effective resistance to all attempts at penetration by the male organ and thus preventing intercourse from taking place. In such a case the woman herself will have been quite ignorant of anything unusual in her condition until the attempt to consummate the marriage has been made and failed, and both she and her new made husband will suffer not a little distress as well as physical pain while persistence in the attempt to break through the obstinate barrier is only too likely to produce all the phenomena of vaginismus, described in Chapter VI.

Where in such an unsuccessful attempt at penetration an ejaculation of semen has occurred, there the possibility exists of some minute quantity of the latter finding its way through the small opening in the hymen into the vagina, and so ultimately causing conception to take place in a woman exhibiting all the out-

ward signs of unbroken virginity. The late Sir W. H. Broadbent relates that he was consulted by a medical colleague two months after marriage, who had found the structure of his wife's hymen so unyielding that all efforts to effect an entrance in the natural way had proved unavailing, while the lady herself was yet by that time three or four weeks advanced in pregnancy, and had just missed her period. Many such cases, puzzling to the non-expert, are on record, where "fecundation has occurred while perfect connection must have been impossible."

In cases where the hymen is found so persistent as to obstruct and render impossible the intromission of the male organ, the only treatment possible is surgical; the obstinate membrane will yield quite easily to the surgeon's instrument, and, the incision made, the obstacle will be permanently removed. Where this kind of difficulty is experienced, a medical practitioner should be at once consulted without false modesty, so that relief may be obtained.

The same remark applies to cases where, even after the rupture of the hymen, the opening of the vagina proves too small to allow of union in any but the most tentative form, even this being probably accompanied by great pain. Here, too, the danger is that vaginismus may be set up; but this obstacle, like the other, is as a rule easily removed by medical aid, which should be called in wherever the attempt to establish normal relations has met with failure.

Far more serious than the mere toughness of the hymen—which is not uncommon in brides who do not enter marriage until they are past thirty—are the cases where that membrane is naturally "imperforate," i.e., stretched across the whole orifice of the vagina. Where this malformation is discovered before the stage of adolescence is reached, the surgeon will quickly and

easily effect the necessary severance, and no further trouble is likely to ensue. Unless, however, the obstruction be so removed at an early age, the full process of menstruation will, of course, become impossible, and the menses, instead of escaping through the natural orifice, will be retained, causing distension of the vagina and uterus, and in time very grave danger to health and even life. As a rule, the imperforate condition of a girl's hymen will be detected by her mother, and must be at once medically attended to, where this is done, menstruation, when puberty sets in, will proceed normally, and should the girl marry later on, the accomplishment of intercourse will present no difficulty.

Impotence in a woman may also take the form of an imperforate vagina, that is to say, the canal may come to an end prematurely, through its walls adhering, making penetration quite impossible, or there may be just a transverse membrane—as it were, a second hymen—stretched somewhere halfway between the entrance of the vagina and the uterus. The latter type of malformation may be operatively dealt with, though, of course, there is no need for surgical action in the case of an unmarried woman, and an operation upon the vagina should never be resorted to without very strong cause. Cases where the walls of the canal adhere are inoperable, nor would an operation be of any avail, for “in these instances the uterus and ovaries are usually either absent, or they exist only in a rudimentary state,” i.e., there is true and incurable impotence.

We turn, in the next instance, to true sterility in women, cases i.e., where although the external genital organs are fully developed and normally formed, permitting of conjugal intercourse, there is yet some defect or maladjustment of the inner sex-organs, preventing conception.

We have already spoken of catarrh of the uterus, especially the cervix, that part which intrudes into the vaginal canal, as causing barrenness, and will only add that though this complaint is often the result of the introduction of gonorrhœic poison, it may also be due to a variety of other causes, such as too rapid a succession of pregnancies, exposure to cold and wet, sexual over-excitement, etc ; it would therefore be injudicious and frequently an act of great injustice for a sufferer from uterine catarrh to jump to the conclusion that she has been venereally infected by her husband. The matter is one for medical diagnosis and subsequent treatment.

Frequently sterility may be accounted for by the extreme smallness of the mouth of the uterus, or contraction of the cervical canal, rendering it highly improbable—though we should not say impossible—for male sperm cells to enter. Such narrowness of the canal of the cervix is also, it may be said in passing, one of the common causes of dysmenorrhœa, or painful menstruation, the flow having, as it were, to force its way through an unduly constricted channel. The procedure of enlarging this passage—known as dilatation of the cervix—for the purpose of facilitating menstruation must be viewed with considerable misgiving; for apart from being necessarily painful, and liable to set up other complications, its effects are merely temporary, the opening so made being sure to contract again, and that within quite measurable time. Where a woman suffers from severe pains at each menstrual period through this cause, or traces her childlessness to it, she should hesitate twice and thrice before submitting to a remedy which may be much worse than the disease. Dysmenorrhœa may be mitigated in various ways (see Chap. III), while childlessness may at worst be borne.

In many women, again, it is not the opening of the uterus, but some displacement or deflection of the organ

as a whole, which prevents the semen from entering it, so that intercourse remains sterile. Slight cases of this kind, once properly diagnosed are frequently remediable, while graver ones may sometimes be corrected by an operation, the wife and husband can but seek the best professional advice, and decide for themselves whether they will have recourse to the proposed method. Sometimes the desired result may be brought about by the simple expedient of the wife lying face downwards for a time after union has taken place.

It is not always realised that intercourse may be rendered infertile through the presence of that common ailment leucorrhœa, or "whites," this acid secretion, which is a symptom of vaginal catarrh, sterilises the sperm cells as soon as ejaculated, and since this is a trouble which few women escape, and which has a strong tendency to recur and become chronic, a few words may be said here as to its treatment both in the interests of general health and because it probably plays a larger part in rendering otherwise healthy women sterile than is generally imagined. As among the causes which produce leucorrhœa sexual excitement must be named as one, and as such excitement certainly serves to aggravate the disease, it is to be recommended that where a woman suffers from whites conjugal relations should be, if not suspended, yet reduced in frequency, and that the wife should remain as passive as possible. She will be the better for a tonic such as quinine, and must avoid or correct constipation. Hip baths with cold salt water will have a salutary effect, and an astringent solution should be injected into the vagina by means of an enema, even after the leucorrhœa has disappeared a daily injection of cold or lukewarm water should be continued for a time, so as to prevent its recurrence. In no case must leucorrhœa be allowed to go on, under the mistaken impression that it will "run its course" and



cease of its own accord, if neglected, it will simply get worse, while the profuse discharge will quite effectively sterilise the male cells

Just as too narrow an opening of the vagina may prevent normal intercourse from taking place, so an exceptionally wide vaginal canal may be the cause of frustrating the result of intercourse after union has occurred, by allowing the semen which has been ejected to escape again. Where this is the suspected cause of sterility, the obvious remedy is for the woman to remain with legs tightly closed or even crossed, for some time after union, so retaining the semen and enabling it to reach its destination

Reference must be made to a number of diseases which are known to be unfavourable to conception on the part of women suffering from them, though not necessarily so if their husbands are the sufferers. Such diseases are scrofula, whether without or with tubercular development, diabetes, rickets, pulmonary consumption and a tendency to excessive stoutness. The poisons, too, which are generated in the system by typhus and puerperal fever, tend to injure and may destroy the capacity for motherhood. It is of course, not desirable that the diseased should produce offspring after their own kind, and we cannot pretend to regret that in instances such as these nature seems to have entered her veto against such reproduction, indeed, one might wish that morbid and pathological conditions were in all cases accompanied by an atrophy of the generative power as unfortunately they are not.

Finally, it is often stated that the total absence of response or feeling manifested by a wife in the conjugal embrace—her sexual anæsthesia—may be a predisposing cause of childlessness. It is certainly the case that a proportion of "frigid" wives remain sterile, on the other hand, there is abundant evidence that women who

feel neither the desire for union nor any pleasure in it, may conceive again and again. Under this heading, therefore, it is impossible to speak with any assurance; again, one can only wish that a woman who shrinks from the approach of any particular man, might at least be spared the fate of a maternity which cannot but be doubly repugnant to her.

In surveying this wide field, as we have been doing all too summarily, and considering how many and various are the causes which may prove a bar to parenthood, one is apt to reflect with something like wonder on the small proportion of marriages which prove childless owing to the impotence or sterility of husband or wife; yet the childless couple happily remains the conspicuous exception, even to-day. We cannot, however, bring this chapter to a close without pressing one thought upon our male readers in particular. Incapacity for motherhood is woman's misfortune, often her tragedy and endless regret, incapacity for fatherhood is too often man's shame and reproach, the result of his abuse of powers which were given him for something other and nobler than selfish gratification.

Let the unmarried man remember that the girl whom he will some day ask to become his wife will in accepting him as her future husband be largely, even though unconsciously, swayed by the hope of the child or children he will enable her to bear—the children for whom the woman in her cries out. He dare not be so dishonourable as to enter a contract—the most solemn contract in life—with the knowledge that he has injured in advance the power to carry it out, that he has weakened his ability to perform his function as a husband, he dare not, above all, approach her, the clean, confiding woman, with the poison of sex-disease lurking in his system, and communicate that poison to her. It may

seem difficult, but it is ten times worth while, to keep himself chaste until marriage, as he expects her to have kept herself; worth while to cross the threshold of married life with his virile faculties unimpaired, unsullied, at their best and fullest; to take her into his arms and give himself to her, a stainless man, as she gives herself to him, a stainless maid.

So, pure-eyed and joyous, may they celebrate the blameless mysteries of wedded love; so, in a rapture of which soul partakes as well as sense, will they crown their love by creating love's holiest token—a beloved child.

## CHAPTER X

## THE CONTROL OF CONCEPTION

It would be impossible to send forth a book on the Realities of Marriage without dealing with the subject indicated in our chapter heading, a subject which is every year being discussed in wider and wider circles, and is assuming a practical importance second to none within the whole field of marriage relationships. Perhaps the following facts will indicate the tremendous change which has come over public opinion in regard to this matter within the recollection of people no more than middle aged. About the year 1890 a medical practitioner, Dr Arthur Allbutt was struck off the roll for having, in a little volume called *The Wife's Handbook*, given practical advice on the prevention of conception, such conduct being at the time regarded as professionally infamous, in 1921 Birth Control was openly advocated by no less a personage than the King's Physician, Lord Dawson of Penn, and from no less exalted a platform than that of the Church Congress, and his utterance received the blessing of that highly respectable and anything but revolutionary organ, the *Spectator*. Not often has one seen within little over thirty years, so striking a vindication of the saying which tells us how "the whirligig of time brings its revenges." That for which the pioneer was vilified and stoned becomes, while he himself is generally forgotten, the common possession of the next generation.

We trust we have made it abundantly clear that in our view children are the crown and glory of a normal marriage, that motherhood is woman's true destination, and that the dignity and blessedness of parenthood, where they are rightly valued and enjoyed, are exceeding great. We do not for one moment doubt that there have been and are happy though childless marriages, and yet we have no hesitation in saying that their happiness is a second best, and that the man and woman who have never looked upon a child of their very own, have missed something for which no other joy can compensate. It is the child who transforms into a home what before his advent was only a dwelling, it is the child who cements and keeps in being many a bond which, but for this living link, might in many instances have gone very ignominiously to pieces.

On the other hand we have first and last, and to the point of weariness made our reasoned protest against the view which maintains that marriage and its relationships have procreation as their one admissible object, and need not here repeat at any length what we have previously remarked under this heading. Little as the advocates of this view may be aware of it, the fact remains that it is essentially a low one—true enough of the animal creation maybe, but unworthy of application to human beings. Whatever the sex function may have been in our sub-human ancestors, in man it becomes something more and other than an act undertaken for the sole purpose of begetting progeny, or for the relief of merely physical cravings. In the course of the ages, and with the advance of civilisation the crude sexual appetite and its satisfaction have been transformed so as to become the symbols of that mutual surrender, tenderness, boundless trust and affection which are of the essence of a true marriage. Those who cannot or will not see this, and would permit marital

relations only when undertaken with the explicit implicit object of propagation, stand below, and not, they think, above the average level of thought and feeling. To say it yet once more, while we hold that parenthood is one of the objects of conjugal intercourse, deny altogether that is the one and only object.

What, then, we ask ourselves—and the question occurs to every couple entering upon marriage—are the rules which ought to guide them in this all-important matter? Are they to trust to what some of them will call Providence and others chance, and simply await results, accepting as many children as are "sent" them? A woman's capacity for child-bearing extends, roughly for something over thirty years; if she marries at twenty-five, she may thus—allowing for the improbability of conception during lactation—quite possibly become the mother of a swarm of a dozen children; and cases are on record where the arrival of a baby was an almost annual event. One has only to look at the typical "family houses" of the middle of the nineteenth century to see that the very large family was then the rule among the English middle class, and must thus have been even more customary among the labouring population; with this distinction, that the former were able, owing to ample means and decent surroundings, to rear almost all their offspring, while the latter, in the absence of these desirable conditions, buried a considerable proportion of theirs. The question whether our Victorian great-grandparents *wanted* seven or eight children rather beside the mark—the wives of that day probably did not want seven or eight pregnancies, confinements and periods of nursing; but they had, or underwent them because they could not help themselves.

If statistics were available and accessible, the world probably shows that even at that period the people who had most children were those who could least afford

them, just as to this day the birth-rate among the "unskilled" is almost twice as high as among the upper and middle classes. Childbirth, preceded by months of varied discomfort, is almost always a very severe ordeal, and deaths in childbed are still frequent enough to give point to the familiar feminist gibe "Surely, you won't deny that ours," i.e., the married women's, "is a dangerous trade." Now, given comfortable circumstances, good housing, with plenty of cubic space, the best medical and nursing skill, and adequate domestic help, allowing the mother time and leisure for recuperation, a great deal may be done to reduce the full effects of a fairly rapid succession of confinements, but where child after child arrives while these conditions are lacking, i.e., in the majority of instances, the toll taken of the mother's health is enormous, and with the increasing burden of responsibility for her little ones, her life is apt to become mere drudgery, a martyrdom, to which death, resulting from an enfeebled constitution, may set a merciful term.

What happens to the wife of the lower-class worker who has had, say, six babies in eight years of married life? She has never got properly strong after the birth of one before another one was on the way, the entire care of the household rests on her shoulders, and do what she will she can never overtake the work which piles itself up for her as day succeeds laborious day. And, living under such circumstances—if it can be called living—she has still to be prepared to "fulfil her wisely duty" to her husband, with the ever present dread of another, and yet another, baby crowding on the heels of its last predecessor. Each new arrival constitutes a fresh problem of how to make both ends meet, lowers the level of subsistence for the whole family, means poorer food, shoddier clothing, physical—and not only physical—deterioration for all of them. Because wages

don't go up automatically with each further "increase" Who that is familiar with our slums and mean streets, the habitats of casual and unskilled labour, would have the hardihood to maintain that this is a fancy picture?

Or let us ascend several steps higher in the social scale, and take the couple where the breadwinner is a clerk, small official, journalist, teacher, struggling tradesman. To such as these, one child represents the heart's desire, two a very considerable sacrifice, while a further addition would spell downright poverty. What are such people to do? Bring into the world the children they cannot afford? Or——?

There is an answer given to such questions by a certain type of religionists, and given with the air of those who are the guardians of a particularly lofty morality, which is yet the reverse of helpful. The questioners are told that they are either, by all manner of means, to have all the children that may arrive and stand by the consequences of their acts, or else they are to refrain from the acts which may result in more children than they can keep in comfort. Faced with the not unnatural objection that under such a ruling a married couple might in all their lives indulge a very few times in conjugal relations, an Anglican Bishop coldly retorted that he saw no harm in that.

It is hard to believe that those who take up this attitude are serious, or that, if serious, they have any acquaintance with human life or human nature, and in so far as this view of marital relationships is often set forth and defended by people who are themselves celibates, and thus without experience of what they are talking about, one cannot help being reminded of certain religionists and rigorists of olden times, concerning whom we read: "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their



finger " We cannot think of anything more unhelpful than the loveless dogmatism of these people who, in Dr Havelock Ellis's burning phrase, " arrogantly claim to direct the moral affairs of the world, even in the most intimately private matters, and who are yet ignorant of the most elementary facts of the world "

Fortunately for itself, humanity—outside certain narrow coteries—declines to follow these blind leaders or to bow to their pontifical decrees " Imagine," said Lord Dawson to the Church Congress, " a young married couple in love with each other—the parents say, of one child, who feel they cannot afford another child for, say, three years—being expected to occupy the same room and to abstain for two years The thing is preposterous You might as well put water by the side of a man suffering from thirst and tell him not to drink it " And very courageously the eminent physician went on to hint at the consequences—no doubt undreamed-of by most of those whom he was addressing, but familiar enough to anyone who, like the present writer, is in the habit of receiving the confidences of married folk : difficulties—which attend these attempts at abstinence viz , " the inevitable prevalence of sex-excitement followed by abortive and half-realised satisfaction, and the enhanced risk of the man or woman yielding to outside sex temptations "

We cannot undertake to travel yet once more over ground previously traversed, or to argue with those who, whether avowedly or unavowedly, hold a low view of sex as something impure, and of the sex-function as one which, since its exercise is unhappily necessary for the purpose of procreation, should at least be strictly limited to that purpose Discussion with such as this is as unattractive in itself as it is barren of results, and arguments are addressed to those healthy men and women who are not afraid of sex, though aware of the

dangers of its misuse, and who believe, with Lord Dawson, that "passion is a worthy possession" These—and they constitute the immense majority of clean and wholesome people—know well that they do not marry in order to live as though unmarried, and when celibates invite them to practise something as near as possible to celibacy, they remember the ancient fable of the tailless fox who preached taillessness as the *beau idéal* of foxhood—without, it must be admitted, achieving any notable success in effecting conversions.

One fact is so obvious as to brook no contradiction. Nature has endowed man not only with a capacity but with an urgent desire for sex-relations altogether out of proportion to the number of children which may spring from any marriage. What, then, is this capacity for, in the great scheme of things? The answer is furnished by universal human experience, which testifies that sex-relations have acquired a new meaning, a new sanction, with the rise from bruteness to manhood, and have become a uniquely significant token and seal of conjugal affection. Granted so much—and to grant it requires only an exercise of elementary honesty with ourselves—it follows that it is not necessary to engage in conjugal relations exclusively for a purpose which is not its *only* purpose. We have instanced some of the many cases in which procreation may, for quite good and sufficient reasons, be neither desired nor desirable, we would remind the reader of other such cases, referred to in our chapter on "Marriage and Health," where the physical state of the wife forbids her having any additional children or any child at all. Since, however, any marital act may have the undesired result of causing conception to take place, the problem becomes simply this—whether it may be practicable to devise means which preclude such an untoward result, while permitting to husband and wife that full possession of one

another for which they naturally and legitimately long

One consideration may be put forward before we proceed further, a consideration which should at least make thoughtful men and women agree that the control of conception, assuming it to be realisable, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. If the procreation of children is admittedly the greatest and most solemn obligation two people can undertake, involving issues that go beyond their own lifetime, one would naturally wish that such an act should be undertaken deliberately, with a due regard to the wisdom or unwisdom of it, to the likelihood of their being able to make proper provision for the child's upbringing, instead of leaving the matter to blind hazard. The giving of life to a human being should be something better than a gamble, a game of chance in which the participants rather hope—as is so often the case—that the consequence which may very well follow, will not follow. The desire for offspring is deeply rooted in the race, but it would surely be far and away better that children should only be engendered when both parents are at their physical best, when both are wishful for another child, and when there is reasonable prospect of sufficient subsistence for such a new arrival. Everywhere man signals his mastery of circumstances by substituting purpose for chance, by adapting the processes of nature to the service of his reasonable will, that he should do so in a matter which so intimately concerns him as the number of his own children—those whom it will be his task to rear and train to manhood and womanhood—seems so obviously in accord with commonsense that the wonder is rather that the idea of controlling this particular force should excite any opposition.

One is reminded of the vehement protests which

greeted the application of chloroform in childbirth, on the ground that women were *intended* by Heaven to suffer the agonies of which science wickedly relieved them, it is the same order of mentality which maintains that in what is literally a life and death matter Chance the blind god must by no means be interfered with, nor man be allowed to plan his destiny

Thus we confess ourselves anything but convinced when a recent writer\* tells us that birth control is "an unnatural crime and a sin akin to murder," for a little reflection should suffice to show that *not to give life* to a child is wholly different from quenching a life that has once been given. The latter is of the essence of procuring miscarriage an abhorrent practice rightly treated by the law as a grave and punishable offence. Still less are we impressed by the same writer's unsupported statements that "birth control cannot make for happiness" to which it is sufficient to reply that there is abundant evidence to the contrary, or when he declares that "to the conscience of mankind birth control is a shameful action" which provokes the question how anyone has arrived at such precise and comprehensive knowledge of the verdict given by the conscience of all mankind. These are mere dogmatisms, uttered without a particle of proof, and the sufficient answer is, "It is not so."

The motives which, all the civilised world over, are impelling men and women to seek for harmless and effective means to limit the number of their offspring, are very seldom to be traced to the mere selfishness which wishes to evade responsibility, or to a desire for "unrestrained indulgence without the fear of consequences," as is sometimes recklessly alleged. These people desire no more, taken in the mass, than to live

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\* Dr H G Sutherland \* Birth Control

normal lives, with a normal exercise of conjugal functions, while taking measures which shall ensure them against burdens exceeding their bearing capacity. Those who aim at the control of conception do so for economic or health reasons, sometimes for both combined, and neither feel, nor are called upon to feel, any shame or remorse when they successfully solve an urgent problem of existence

We have had occasion to glance at cases where marriage, but not motherhood, may be permissible to a girl, because she is not constitutionally fit for the latter, it would be simply monstrous to tell her that she may not marry the man whom she loves, and who loves her, except under penalty of bearing children whose arrival would almost certainly imperil her life. Humanity refuses to bow to such dictation, but will endeavour to find ways and means of enabling such a one to marry—in the full sense of the term—without taking known risks that might prove deadly. Or the family doctor has pronounced his decree that a mother who has passed through a very severe childbirth, and suffered some permanent injury on what has been called woman's battlefield, must have no more babies, such instances are of common occurrence. She and her husband are still young, still lovers—is it to be thought of that they are to cease leading a conjugal life, and resign themselves to a mere simulacrum of marriage? There are plenty of renunciations imposed on us, which there is no escaping, but to urge renunciation without necessity is neither wise nor wholesome, and such a couple will rightly welcome a method which will still allow them to be husband and wife

Still more widely prevalent, and fully as legitimate, is the economic motive. It is not selfishness but rather a sense of duty which makes men keenly conscious

of the fact that they simply could not afford to feed, clothe and educate an additional child—that they could not do so without reducing the whole level of the family's existence below the line of decent wellbeing. It is the thrifty, the intelligent, the self-respecting who are strongly impressed with the fact that to bring up one or two children well-nourished, their health cared for, their minds efficiently trained, is to render a better service to the community than to have a family of half-a-dozen, none of whom will be able to enjoy these advantages. To talk of the duty of every couple, irrespective of their economic circumstances, to produce at least four children, is merely to indulge in unintelligent sentimentalism, upon which those at whom it is aimed might well retort by asking the State first to fulfil its corresponding duty of enabling them to keep that number of young mortals, with their healthy appetites and other growing wants. To bring children into the world without something more than a vague hope of being in a position to provide for them should be branded as an act, not of faith but of folly, and criminal folly at that.

It is sometimes urged that the way to cope with this problem is not to aim at the control of conception, but at such social reforms as will make control unnecessary, and permit of the breeding of large families. But on the one hand the couple in very moderate circumstances cannot wait for the realisation of Utopian dreams, which will in any case not meet with fulfilment in their lifetime; and on the other, it still remains to be proved that the large family is a blessing to be desired, even if there are the means for its maintenance. A number of confinements, taking place at too short intervals, will still undermine the mother's constitution, ageing her before her time; the supervision of a whole household of boys and girls will still prove an excessive tax upon her energies, which after all are limited; and in the

event of the father's premature death—such things do happen—the widow with a swarm of orphan children depending on her for everything will be in a truly desperate position, and bitterly wish that at least the last baby had not arrived to add to her troubles.

Or take the case, increasingly frequent, of people who could marry only on the understanding that there are no children until they find themselves better off—until the man's income is adequate—until there is a house for them to move into—are such as these to remain unmarried wasting their youth and denying their love its consummation, or are they to contract a marriage in name only, and practise an unnatural abstinence? What the latter kind of compacts lead to is easier to imagine than to put into language, we refer the reader to Lord Dawson's words, quoted a few pages back, and will only add that our knowledge of such cases fully and deplorably bears out his statement.

There remains the bogey of "race suicide," a slogan very vociferously raised, with appeals to the evidence of the falling birth rate, by those who believe that only in the production of copious offspring lies any hope for the future, i.e., the future not so much of humanity as rather their country. Unless we can outbreed other nations they will outbreed us and then we shall cease to count in the world—so, rightly understood, runs this plea, and it is based from beginning to end, upon ignorance, misunderstanding and fallacy, being in essence an appeal to quantity as of more importance than quality.

Now such an appeal must fail. It is not the most numerous nations, as has been well pointed out, but quite small communities that have made the most signal contributions to civilisation—the Greeks and the Jews rather than the innumerable myriads of Further Asia.

In the second place, so far is it from being the case that a steadily-increasing pressure of population is to be desired, that such an increase is rather the surest means of intensifying that industrial and economic competition which leads to militarism and all the horrors of war—as we have seen to our cost and may yet see again. In Dr Havelock Ellis's words, "The Great War has shown what comes to a world where men have been for long generations produced so copiously and so cheaply that it is natural to regard them as only fit to sweep off the earth with machine guns." That a stationary and not an ever growing population might be for Europe's blessing is the deliberate opinion of so independent a mind as Dr Inge, the Dean of St Paul's.

But, finally, the inference drawn from the falling birth rate misses its mark, as has been luminously and conclusively shown by Dr Havelock Ellis, in his most important essay on "The Individual and the Race." A high birth rate invariably means a correspondingly high infantile death rate, a large proportion of the recklessly bred child population being hurried out of the world into which they should never have been brought. There is woeful point and pathos about the well known epitaph which might be placed on so many babies' tombstones—

Since I so soon was to be done for  
I wonder what I was begun for!

What matters is not the crude birth rate, but the survival rate, and the fall in the birth rate has everywhere been accompanied by a fall in the infantile death rate. Fewer babies are born, but more remain alive which seems both more humane and less wasteful than the practice of raising the birth-rate indiscriminately, and so producing "a great increase in the population—of the graveyards." In Holland, where the control of conception was first systematically taught in 1881, and where



there are now over fifty birth-control clinics at work, we read that "there has been a decrease of 25 per cent in the birth-rate, but at the same time a decrease of 66 per cent in the infantile death rate" And "in England and Wales, where the birth rate has steadily fallen during the last forty years from 36 to 23, the population is still increasing and even if the present falls in birth rate and death rate continue, it will for years still go on increasing by an excess of over 1,000 births a day" Whether we should not rather be alarmed than overjoyed at such figures is another question, what is not questionable at all, is that they dispose of the alarmist cry of "race suicide" in connection with the control of conception. Such control is unobjectionable from the moral standpoint, it is in innumerable instances of the highest expediency, and in many more absolutely necessary on medical grounds the only question is whether it can be safely, harmlessly and efficiently exercised.

The answer is that such methods of control do exist, what has to be remembered is firstly, that no human contrivance but may fail in careless hands, and, secondly, that not every method will be found equally suitable by all. We have to bear in mind the exact object which is to be accomplished, viz. to prevent the female ovum being reached by one of the innumerable sperm cells liberated in every complete act of union. This may be effected either by shutting off the uterus by placing a rubber cap pessary over its neck, or by preventing the semen from being ejaculated into the vagina, i.e., by means of a sheath, or by immediately sterilising the ejaculated sperm cells, as may be done by the use of soluble quinine pessaries. Where it is desired to make assurance doubly sure, two of these methods may be combined, we forbear from giving

detailed instructions adding only that none but the best appliances must be used, and that the utmost care and cleanliness are *de rigueur*

Without however, entering into particulars as regards the above named preventive measures—particulars which may be found in the author's *Wise Wedlock*—we feel it our duty to warn against two others, one of which enjoys, strangely enough, the sanction of religious bodies which are inexorably opposed to other forms of birth-control. This is the practice of restricting unions to those parts of the woman's lunar cycle when she is, generally speaking, less liable to conceive, *i.e.*, from about the tenth day after the commencement of menstruation until a week before her next courses are due. The plea that this method may be resorted to without moral guilt, while others may not, because it involves "no evil will to defeat the course of nature," strikes us as specious and sophistical, those who have recourse to it will do so in the desire to circumvent consequences of which they are afraid, which is much the same purpose and mental attitude. But the principal reason for advising against the expedient of "timed" unions is that it is totally unreliable, there is no guarantee that conception may not take place during the ten days or so in question, and those who trust in the alleged immunity of the "middle period" may find that they have been leaning on a broken reed.

The other highly inadvisable and very widely-practised method is that of withdrawal just before ejaculation takes place. This too, is not to be relied on, as an instant's involuntary delay may frustrate the object, it imposes an immense and injurious strain on the husband, and, by leaving the wife stimulated but unsatisfied, is the cause of a vast amount of neurotic trouble—a cause frequently unsuspected, but immensely powerful for mischief, especially in the case of highly-

strung women, whose neurasthenic temperament is often the direct result of long-practised uncompleted intercourse

There will always be, as there always have been, frivolous and selfish people of both sexes, who basely evade the responsibilities of parenthood, as they evade all other responsibilities which would limit the range of their opportunities for indulgences of all kinds. Such, by their refusal to achieve the dignity of motherhood and fatherhood, merely judge themselves, as they also deprive themselves of what is best in life, and in an age when the craze for pleasure is alarmingly on the increase, we should be failing in our duty if we did not warn any young man or woman reading this book against the folly of denying themselves what later on they will bitterly regret having missed, viz, the children that should have been their joy and blessing. This is, indeed, to sell their birthright—the glorious right and faculty to make their love immortal—for a paltry mess of pottage, which will nauseate them the nearer they get to the bottom of the dish. By all means let them have the children they can see their way to rear in health and frugal comfort, as distinct from either luxury or want, by all means let them make many a sacrifice for the wellbeing of the growing lives which they have called into being, not relying on chance, but exercising their will and foresight.

There is unspeakable pride and satisfaction in looking upon a child of whom the parents can say, "We wanted him," and if the self-denials inseparable from true parenthood are not always easy, they are always in the highest sense worth while.

The reader is referred to the following works—

"Manhood" by Charles Thompson, Chapter VI "Shall I Have a Family?"

"Little Essays of Love and Virtue," by Havelock Ellis

## CHAPTER XI

## THE RECEDING TIDE

*The tumult and the shouting dies,  
The captains and the kings depart,  
Still stands the ancient sacrifice*

So Rudyard Kipling wrote in that one of all the productions of his genius which by common consent is the most likely to go down to immortality. The event which called forth the *Recessional* naturally does not loom so large in the eyes of this generation as it did in the sight of its predecessor, for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 was but the proper climax, and itself marked the close, of that Victorian Era which to us seems so inconceivably remote. The world has become a different world since then, and England a different England whether a better world, a better England, are questions which happily we are not called upon to discuss in this place. But while the occasion which inspired Kipling's poem was a passing occasion the emotion which he expressed in it was a universal emotion begotten of that sense of contrast between the transient and the permanent which at times comes upon all men in every age, and now and again finds a fitting utterance, which is at once recognised as such and seized upon—as the *Recessional* was—by the general mind. And thus it is that the lines which head this chapter, little relevancy as they seem to possess in connection

with our general subject, will be found applicable to that particular aspect of the Realities of Marriage of which it will now be our task to treat

The reader of this book who has followed us so far will remember our description of the stage in the individual's development which marks the transition from childhood to man's or woman's estate. Mysteriously, and not without travail and disturbance, new forces emerge new characteristics of bodily structure and appearance manifest themselves, a whole new range of feelings and interest rises into view, and almost before our eyes—certainly before the eyes of a thoughtful parent—the transformation accomplishes itself which makes of the boy and girl of yesterday the young man and young woman of to day

Themselves profoundly, if inarticulately, aware that they are other than they were a short while ago, they become also profoundly and disconcertingly aware of one another; between these two now in their teens, there is no longer the entire unconstraint that marked their common games but a little time back—a new fact has made its appearance in their lives destined to affect their relationships henceforth, to make itself persistently felt, utterly refusing to be ignored the fact of sex. They have become so different from each other that they cannot be indifferent to each other. And it all dates from the rising of that strange tide which so perplexed, and maybe frightened, them when they themselves became conscious of it—the tide which was to make them Man and Woman

All that the wise parent or educator can do is to see to it that this natural process shall not be accompanied by disaster, that there should be intelligent preparation for it, lest it should work havoc and devastation; he will know when to expect it, and take measures

accordingly—under no circumstances will he make the futile attempt to dam it up artificially or to issue decrees of "Thus far and no further!" We can understand the regret with which fathers and mothers may note the disappearance of childlike traits, the emergence of quite a novel set of characteristics—for they know, among other things that the new phase upon which their children are entering will bring new risks and dangers, new desires and temptations but they know also that nature will have her way, and can but endeavour to ease this inevitable transition by timely instruction and intelligent—but not fussy or nervous—supervision. Neither boys nor girls can be kept in leading strings for ever, and they will resent and ultimately frustrate any intention to keep them there, for an instinct deeper than all argument tells them that *this tide is destined to carry them to a fuller, more abundant life*.

We have seen how, when these adolescents reach manhood and womanhood, this anticipation of theirs is realised, how the sexes seek each other out by an implanted necessity, each finding in the other his or her complement. Lovers, in the beautiful phrase of Plato, are in search of the other half of themselves, urged by the intuition that only by meeting with such another half can they come into possession of the highest good, and love between man and woman expresses and fulfils itself through the attraction and instrumentality of sex. Let us not be afraid to see the sex-tide run strongly, for it goes together with the finest endowments of our nature—it is characteristic of the great "makers," of all creative genius, all that is needed is that it should be kept clean and made to flow in the right channels. We do not seek to extinguish all fires because fire often proves a destructive element—we only surround it with safeguards in order to prevent conflagrations; it would be as foolish, and even more impossible, to try to elimin-

ate the sex-impulse as though it were evil in itself, or to confine its action to the mere work of propagation. Like the River of Egypt, it makes fruitful the whole plain of life, converting what else would be a desert into fertile field and fragrant garden.

But having thus flowed strongly and for many years in the life of the individual, the time comes when this tide begins, on the physical side at any rate, to recede, the current which swept along, maybe with a mighty rush, dominating the man's or woman's life, grows less irresistible in speed and volume, less clamorous, more placid, and little by little begins to show signs of waning, finally to disappear altogether. "*The tumult and the shouting dies*"—i.e., passion ceases its clamour for satisfaction, and grows silent, "*the captains and the kings depart*"—King Youth, with his well graced attendants, bids us a definite farewell. In other words, the generative power, which played so large a part from the time of puberty onwards, dwindles till it becomes extinct, and desire, in the normal man or woman, ceases to be tyrannous, and ultimately leaves only a memory.

So far the process of which we are speaking, is common to both sexes, but there is a wide divergence in the way it accomplishes itself in man and in woman respectively, and in the phenomena by which it is accompanied. We shall see how radically unequal—some will say how inequitable and unfair—in this as in every other aspect of sex-life, is the division.

Let us for completeness' sake briefly recapitulate the familiar, elementary facts about woman's power of child-bearing. This capacity, which extends, normally, over something like thirty years of her life, or a little more, has for the outward sign of its commencement the

menstrual flow, which first appears somewhere about her fifteenth year, and recurs, once it has established itself, at intervals of twenty eight days. Menstruation may last from three to four or five to seven days, it may be copious or scanty, painless or painful, regular or irregular, but while it continues the woman is capable of conceiving children, it is suspended during pregnancy, and almost always during lactation, i e, while a woman nurses a baby, but its recommencement signifies that conception may occur again. (We are, of course speaking of the normal woman, not of cases of natural or acquired sterility, as treated in Chapter IX.)

Now menstruation, as we know, coincides—whatever be the connection between the two—with the phenomenon of ovulation, the monthly bursting of an ovum from its envelope, followed by its progress through the oviducts, or Fallopian tubes, into the uterus, either to be fertilised or, failing fertilisation, to pass out of the system. But after continuing to occur regularly until about the forty fifth year, these twin phenomena, the issuing forth of ova and the menstrual discharge, begin to grow less regular, less frequent, and finally cease altogether. The woman has entered upon the great climacteric, generally and very expressively called the change of life, for it is a profound change, and as a rule is not effected without a certain amount both of physical and psychical disturbance, to which there is no analogy in the sex life of man.

Occasionally, indeed, the "menopause"—the cessation of the period—occurs at an earlier age, such a deviation from the normal seems to be, e g, hereditary in certain families. More frequently, however, it is due to illness or shock, thus we have read of a case of the permanent cessation of menstruation at the age of thirty-seven, following upon an attack of typhus, and of another at thirty two, as the result of a severe attack of



rheumatic fever with endocarditis, while diabetes, pulmonary disease, exophthalmic goitre and excessive stoutness may affect the system in a similar manner. Similarly, a woman whose generative apparatus has had to cope with the excessive demands made by over-frequent confinements will often lose the power of bearing further children, i.e., cease to menstruate—doubtless to her great relief and satisfaction—at an earlier than the usual age.

It has been observed that the change of life sets in later in women who have reached puberty at an early age, and *vice versa*; where menstruation did not begin until the sixteenth or seventeenth year, it is liable to cease soon after the fortieth has been reached. To these rules, based on general observation there are, however, many exceptions. By the fiftieth year the monthly courses are almost always a thing of the past, where irregular secretions of blood continue beyond fifty a medical examination is earnestly advised, in order to make sure that the cause is not cancer of the uterus\*.

So strongly is woman destined by nature for the mother's function and office—however often that intention is frustrated in the case of individuals—that when she ceases to be able to fulfil that function her whole system is apt to feel the disturbing effects of the new conditions to which she has to adapt herself. If the rising of the tide and its flow were accompanied by all manner of troubles, it has to be confessed that its ebbing is attended by corresponding phenomena.

To begin with, the period itself manifests vagaries,

\* In view of the distressing nature and frequency of this disease we may say in passing that wherever suspicious symptoms of any kind, such as "lumps" in the breasts or swellings in the region of the genital organs manifest themselves at this time of life a physician should be consulted without delay. The hope of dealing effectively with tumours and the like lies in attacking them in the earliest stages.

and its regular occurrence is no longer to be counted upon, it may return after but a fortnight's or even a week's interval, or it may be absent for two or three months and then reappear—it may be surprisingly scanty or alarmingly copious. All these are among the first symptoms that the tide is on the turn, that the great central phase of a woman's life is approaching its close. But as menstruation becomes irregular, certain reactions are set up in the general system. Many women become subject to nose bleeding or piles, to a rush of blood to the head and various parts of the body, producing sensations of excessive heat or fulness, there is an increased liability to leucorrhœa, and the congested state of the blood in the external genitals is apt to give rise to an almost intolerable itching. Constipation is a frequent phenomenon, while on the other hand the digestive apparatus may suffer in the opposite direction with a tendency to frequent attacks of diarrhœa, in either case the woman will suffer a good deal from flatulence.

The uneven distribution of the blood is the besetting trouble which marks the years of change—the extra blood pressure may overtax the heart and cause more or less distressing symptoms from palpitation to much graver complications. Where there have been previous signs of heart disease there will be a redoubled liability to attacks, which must always be taken seriously and attended to at once. Catarrhs of the bladder, nervous irritability—indeed most of the ills that afflict womanhood during this trying phase—are ultimately to be traced to the same cause, the irregular circulation of the blood, which is so characteristic of the change of life.

All this means that a woman who has reached this critical age will be well advised in practising moderation and simplicity in her general manner of life. One can

not sufficiently insist upon the value of a plain diet, abstinence from stimulants plenty of fresh air and gentle exercise, these are commonplaces indeed, but if they were taken to heart, and consistently acted upon, there would be far fewer cases of physical breakdown in women who—once past this awkward stage, and free henceforth from the possibility of child bearing—ought to be looking forward to a prolonged healthy and happy epoch of middle age gradually changing into old age. Let it here be said that a woman does not lose along with her capacity for conception, all desire for union, should that desire be morbidly intensified, she must, of course, seek to check it as any overindulgence will only increase the irritable condition of her nerves, but there is no objection to the temperate satisfaction of her sexual needs so long as she is conscious of them. In many women these wants, unless stimulated by a husband, are never very strong, and with the change of life once accomplished they simply fade out altogether.

Just as we have time after time dwelt upon the importance to woman's health of a simple and temperate way of life so we would reiterate our plea for scrupulous cleanliness as particularly necessary in order to mitigate one of the troubles of this period that irritation of the outer genitals which often is little short of torturing. Granted that this is chiefly due to the blood-congested state of the parts the discomfort will be materially increased where the claims of cleanliness are disregarded and may be much allayed by frequent ablutions. If a woman will take the trouble to apply a wet sponge locally several times on each day she will reap the benefit of so avoiding to add external to internal irritation such ablutions ought to take place as frequently as circumstances will allow.

Now it is hardly thinkable that a woman should

pass through one or more of the physical ailments at which we have been glancing without manifesting the effects in some measure in her temper and disposition. A good many women suffer during those years from low spirits, they are easily depressed, apt to give way to despondency haunted by melancholy fears that they are about to develop some serious disease, and if taking such a gloomy view of their prospects they show a good deal of discontent and an occasional over sensitiveness and even tendency to hysteria, it ought to be recognised that they are being sorely tried. We can but repeat the advice we gave in a previous connection women in this state ought to receive a great deal of indulgence from their daily companions, especially from their husbands—but they ought not to indulge *themselves*, nor give way more than they can help. The determination to dwell as little as possible on the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to can effect wonders without pretending that the ills themselves do not exist we can simply by attending to something else, forget about them at least to a very considerable extent. The woman of forty and over should have some interests outside household and family cares in which she can from time to time immerse herself as the pleasantest alternative to brooding overmuch on her own condition, and there is really no better remedy for most of our troubles than to seek to relieve those of someone else. To cultivate helpfulness a spirit of sympathy, a practical altruism will greatly ease the burden and shift the depression which weigh down the lives of so many women struggling with the menopause.

And this advice, this plea for self-discipline, is rendered the more urgent in view of another aspect of this phenomenon. The cessation of the menstrual function is a clear intimation misunderstood by no woman, that something is coming to an end by which

—if she be a normal woman at all—she set store, and quite legitimately her physical attractiveness, her power to appeal to man

It is at that period that the unmarried girl who was made for wifehood and motherhood bitterly sees her last hopes of realising her true destiny departing, as the very sap of life dries up within her, no wonder she develops an asperity of tongue and temper, which is but the expression of her grievance—a very real grievance—against a scheme of things which has endowed her with normal capacities to which normal fulfilment was denied, through no fault of her own

And it is at this same period that a wife is apt to look in the mirror, detecting the traces of the years—the faded complexion, the tell-tale wrinkles the silver threads in her hair—with a new alarm, a new revolt, the more poignant because of its impotence why, she is ageing, unmistakably ageing, turning into an old woman, while he, her husband, five years or more her senior, is still at the very zenith of his health He is a man in his prime with scarcely a slackening of the zest which he had in the days—how many years ago?—when they were lovers Let her be frank with herself she knows what men are, and that they cannot help being drawn toward youth and beauty, and the high spirits which go with both Is it not too calamitous that there should be this disparity that age should be overtaking her, visibly, palpably, while the man of her choice, to whom she has given her best years should still preserve so much both of the appearance and the instincts of his early manhood? He is still not unattractive in his maturity, her day and power of attraction are going, and will soon be gone And having started on this unprofitable line, she may go on to torture herself and her husband with suspicions, jealousies, wild, unfounded accusation,

Now the less she yields to reflections of this character, the better it will be for her peace of mind; incidentally, by fretting and worrying she will do more to injure her appearance in a year than time would do in five. But since such thoughts do arise in women on the verge of what is woman's autumn, let this be said: the time to provide against that season is in life's springtime and summer. If, during the long years of married life, there has grown up between two people a strong sense of joys and burdens shared together, of mutual trust and mutual forbearance, the recollection of ten thousand things in common between them, then the inevitable waning of his wife's physical charms will not estrange her husband or undermine either his affection or his loyalty. Given that inner accord which all the intervening time should have established, he is more likely to see her as she was when he made her his wife than as she is to-day. There is something stronger in man than the call of the senses; if the marriage has been a true one, these two will, by a subtle alchemy, have so interpenetrated each other that they have become one indeed, and she may bid farewell to youth and outward favour, not perhaps without regret or wistfulness, but without fear. The wife who has shared not merely her husband's home and earnings, but his thoughts and interests, will be the last who need feel any alarm lest now, after the immense hold the years have given her upon him, she should lose what is infinitely more her own than when he led her to the altar:

The tumult and the shouting dies,  
The captains and the kings depart,  
Still stands the ancient sacrifice.

—the vowed affection and tenderness, the indefeasible love which bound, and still binds, them together. Let her hush her apprehensions: the bond between them was never wholly a thing of the senses; it has long since acquired a deeper, more enduring quality. If

she will now, to the best of her power, hold despondency at bay, restrain a propensity to complain, seize opportunities of forgetting personal troubles in disinterested kindness, there is no doubt but she will "win through."

But to the young wife, rejoicing in the fulness of her beauty, and content to know that her youthful charms as yet exercise an unfailing sway over her husband, we would repeat the warning—the time to provide against that autumn which is surely coming, is life's springtime and summer. Let her not delay.

What, then, is man's side of the account? As usual, he fares vastly better than woman, nature, with the same unblushing favouritism which inflicts upon only one sex the monthly discomfort incident to menstruation, which lays on that sex alone the burden, risk and agony of childbirth, spares man anything like the bodily and mental trials which accompany woman's change of life. It is useless to upbraid nature for her preferential treatment of man, which might well by itself have given rise to the idea of a merely masculine Deity, creating man in His own image, and woman as an afterthought for man's convenience, we have only to take cognisance of things as they are.

The facts are these—while woman as we saw, loses her generative power between her forty-fifth and fiftieth year, and while that loss is not accomplished without involving a good many upheavals, man as a rule retains—assuming him to have lived a temperate life—his capacity for fatherhood until a much later age. It is not unusual for a man of sixty to beget children, and fatherhood achieved at three score years and ten excites no other comment save that it bears evidence to a sound constitution—with, perhaps, a qualifying remark expressing doubt as to the wisdom of anyone "rock-

ing the cradle with one foot in the grave." Readers of *Meredith's Beauchamp's Career* will remember the pride of the Earl of Romfrey, on the verge of eighty, recently married, and able to look forward to an heir—a fine specimen of English manhood, truly, unwasted by the lapse of years, unexhausted by indulgence. And, it need hardly be added, so long as the power survives, so long will there be the desire to exercise it, together with the satisfaction which attends the discharge of the sex-function.

We have already expressed the opinion that from every point of view we regard such marriages with a good deal of misgiving; for while the ability to perform the marital act may be unimpaired *per se*, the aged organism as a whole is ill-equipped for bearing the strain and excitement of intercourse, and there is always the danger of the heart in particular being unable to cope with the task imposed on it. A man past his prime would not dream of attempting the feats in the domain of sport which won him applause and celebrity twenty or more years ago—he leaves them to the younger generation; it does not require much reflection to convince us that the same man ought not to attempt in the domain of marriage what belongs—as much as the exploits in the cricket or football field, the high jump or the long-distance race—to a generation which has arisen since his time. If he marries or remarries when past middle-age, he ought at least to exercise great moderation; should he foolishly try to demonstrate that he is "as good as any of the young fellows," he will probably have cause to rue it. Still, so well-known is the fact that man retains his procreative faculty longer than woman retains hers that whereas the marriage of an elderly woman to a young man arouses universal and instinctive disgust, the contrary occurrence excites little unfavourable criticism. For the purposes of matrimony,



i.e., from the point of view of procreation, a man is not, while a woman is, "too old at fifty."

And yet it bears out a very general experience when we say that the average man, too, about that age, becomes aware of the turn of the tide in his sex-life. A great deal, no doubt, depends on the constitution of the individual, a great deal on the moderation or want of it which he has displayed in the use of his powers. If he has been of feeble vitality from the start, such generative impulse as he has ever felt will begin to leave him at an early age; if he has wasted his substance—his virility—in riotous living, he cannot expect to have what he has recklessly spent in a series of overdrafts on the Bank of Life. Men vary considerably in regard to this endowment, and very considerably in their way of husbanding or squandering it. Where there has been habitual indulgence in vicious practices or sexual excess, there, it stands to reason, the source of all sexual activity will run dry—i.e., the secretion of sperm-cells will cease—before its normal time.

Let it also be stated that quite apart from such assignable causes for the premature decay of faculty, there are men who have never been guilty of excess, have been in possession of full virile powers up to the middle forties or thereabouts, and then discover rather suddenly and disconcertingly that the capacity, if not the desire, for intercourse is deserting them. All we can say is that such a phenomenon is on a par with premature greyness or baldness, which attacks some individuals rather than others, and must be borne without undue lamentations; all artificial stimulation of the waning faculty is to be deprecated, though a physician may occasionally sanction a treatment by drugs.

What, however, more generally takes place in the case of healthy men who have led a wholesome and temperate sexual life is that about the fiftieth year, if

not earlier, they become aware of a very gradual slackening of sexual desires, due, of course, to a diminishing secretion of sperm cells, this, however, so far from producing any other bodily or mental discomforts corresponding to those experienced by women undergoing the change of life, leaves them intact in every other respect, so much so that they may just at that period be described as at their best. Add to this that between fifty and sixty a man is as a rule at the height of his zest for the wider interests of life, be they business or politics or what not, and we shall understand that these pressing pursuits may so absorb him as to make him hardly conscious of the degree in which they have taken the place of that which at one time was among his chiefest pre-occupations.

Then begins, for the man of middle age, an epoch of mellow serenity, such as in his hot youth he had not imagined. He has by no means lost either the desire for union or the power of satisfying it, but desire no longer frets or dominates him. Sex is still one of the important things in a complete life for him, but it is no longer the thing above all others, it does not fill his horizon, or blind him to other factors of existence. Let it be understood that though the headlong passion and unrestrainable ardours of youth are no longer his, he is very far from having become sexually indifferent, or incapable of intense gratification, only he has now become the master of what once was all too apt to master him, and can well forego these transports without a sense of hardship or irksome deprivation, if to forego them altogether should prove necessary.

There is a charming Greek anecdote of a middle-aged poet whom his friends were gently rallying on the evidences afforded by his most recent verses of a new love which had come thus late into his life, whereupon he answered with a smile, Ἐχω, οἷκ' ἔχωμαι—"I possess,

I am not possessed " That sums up the happy state which we are describing, the condition of delightful equipoise obtaining when a man is no longer possessed, still less obsessed, by sex and its clamours, but possesses —himself

For the man who has reached this stage there are still, humanly speaking, a good many rich and peaceful years in prospect—" the last of life, for which the first was made, " years in the course of which the tide of sex will continue to ebb, little by little, almost imperceptibly, until finally its last ripple subsides, leaving not so much as a regret behind. Nor will this ebbing process distress those who have not merely " sown unto the flesh, " for this, to them, is not the death of love. On the contrary, love so far from suffering extinction along with the sex impulse, will have become sublimated, spiritualised, during a lifetime so that there is nothing more touching or more real than the deep affection of quite old married folk, in which sex has long ceased to have a part. Its eager cries have died down, its urgencies and satisfactions alike have taken their departure, but " still stands the ancient sacrifice "— still burns the sacred altar fire, aglow with an unearthly brightness, of wedded love

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The reader is referred to the following works —

- Womanhood by Mona Baird Book IV 'Woman in Middle Age  
The Critical Age of Woman by Walter M Galliehan

## CHAPTER XII

## REALITIES AND REALITIES

Throughout the pages of this book we have, in speaking of the Realities of Marriage, been applying that term predominantly to physiological facts, physiological phenomena and processes, viewed in relation to married life. This was an entirely justified use of the phrase, and in saying what we had to say on such subjects as adolescence, marriage and health, the hygiene of conjugal relationships, expectant motherhood, fertility and sterility, birth control, etc., in very plain language, we may hope to have lit a lamp for the use of men and women seeking for guidance on matters too often left in a fog of ignorance and misleading vagueness.

But it will not have escaped the discerning reader that every now and then we have come up against realities of another order, less tangible but not therefore less real or important, belonging to a different field from physiology, yet inextricably intertwined with those physical phenomena of which we have been treating. If conduct has been described as "three fourths of life," we might almost say that conduct is nine tenths of that department of life which we call marriage, and in this concluding chapter it will be our endeavour to deal with various aspects of conduct as related to marriage, possibly recapitulating some things we have said already, but so as to place them in a clearer light. We are not attempting—this by way of reassurance—anything like a systematic treatment in miniature of the ethics of matri-

mony; but a few wayside hints may conveniently bring this work to a close.

And, to begin with, it should be clear that in emphasising so strongly the question of good health and fitness as of paramount importance in the choice of a partner, we were appealing, above all, to the moral sense of every candidate for marriage. Whatever other demand may go unsatisfied, it is morally wrong to leave this one out of consideration, and a wrong which will bitterly avenge itself—unfortunately on others besides the two persons immediately involved. We have said bluntly, and we repeat, that for anyone infected with racial poison to contract marriage is an abominable crime, far worse than many which the law punishes with terms of hard labour; and for the sufferer from transmissible hereditary disease to give life to children who will stand the chance of being similarly afflicted, argues a culpable want of moral feeling. For a healthy girl to accept a man suffering from such a malady as the prospective father of her unborn children, or for the healthy man to make a girl of palpably unsound physique his wife, and to let her bear offspring, is to sin against the future, against the most defenceless of all beings, with open eyes. No amount of romanticism can be allowed to obscure the fact that marriage affects the next generation even more than the present one; its physical realities are bound up from first to last with moral issues. However ardent and sincere a lover, he cannot be absolved from asking himself the question, What kind of father is this man, what kind of mother is this woman, likely to make?—and the answer to that question must weigh heavily in his final decision.

It was Robert Louis Stevenson who said that the world would some day have to come back to the word Duty; we fervently wish that the world would at any

the extent to which the growing child is capable of understanding the elements of the matter. Boys and girls must learn from the outset that these are not topics for guilty concealment, uneasy evasion, to be surrounded with the glamour of secrecy and prohibition, to be giggled and gloated over in corners, but of serious import, to be treated with candour, while, like all other private affairs, they are not to be talked about indiscriminately. A lofty conception of sex and its significance is one of our greatest needs, and should be inculcated from youth upwards; we have to rescue the whole theme from degrading associations, from the manifold *unreality* with which it has been surrounded, and to bring it into an atmosphere of wholesomeness and candour. "More light!" must be our motto; only so shall we succeed in consecrating this powerful impulse, making it the servant of human wellbeing, and not the minister of selfish indulgence.

There is no more fruitful source of failure in marriage than false and debasing conceptions of sex; indeed, it is hard to see how, with such misconceptions prevailing, marriage can ever be anything but a very partial success at the best. Let men and women learn that their bodies are temples of the Divine, to be kept clean and sweet and to be had in reverence; let them understand that the sex-function, when exercised by husband and wife, is meant to be the joyous celebration of something essentially holy, a rite of communion, an act of thanksgiving, a declaration that life is good.

And here let us re-emphasise another reality to which we had, indeed, had previous occasion to draw attention, but which is so often forgotten that it cannot be stressed too much, namely, that while sex-attraction is a *sine qua non* of marriage, it is not by itself a sufficient warrant for embarking on a lifelong joint enterprise. Everyone has known cases of couples who at the very

instant of their first encounter were thrilled through with the feeling that they were made for each other, and who yet—having married on the strength of that intuition—made a very indifferent job of it as man and wife. Now nature, when she spoke in such emphatic language, told no lies, the mistake consisted in the misinterpretation of the testimony so eloquently given. What nature declared was that these two people were ideally suited to be *lovers*, she did not say, because it was not within her province to say, that they were born to spend thirty or more years together in daily companionship, he as bread winner, she as housewife and manager of a household and family. The truth of the matter is that while love is a natural institution, marriage is a social institution, and the presence of the most intense magnetism mutually exercised and undergone offers no guarantee that the two persons in question are at all adapted to "live happily ever after" in the bonds of matrimony. We do not underestimate or deny its place to sentiment, we are ready to affirm that "in love ness"—to coin a convenient term—is a fine sight and a fine experience, but as a reason for marriage it is pathetically inadequate. We have seen too many love matches entered into against the urgent warnings of wiser, cooler heads, and promptly fulfilling the prophecies of misadventure made by the elders whose advice was ignored, and those who are prepared to act on the motto, "All for Love," might be reminded that that is the title of a very famous—*tragedy*. The genius of Mr. Galsworthy has drawn for us, in the concluding portion of his great trilogy, *The Forsyte Saga*, the figures of Jon and Fleur Forsyte, predestined lovers, if ever there were such, but also predestined, by dint of an utter diversity of nature, to have made each other wretched had their marriage taken place. One grieves over youth's desire frustrated, and yet owns with a sigh that it was better so than to

people—during that “exploratory” interval which should follow the discovery of mutual attraction, and precede any formal engagement—would fix their mind on the all-important question: “Is this man—is this girl—(whom, confessedly, I like very much) a man—girl—whose moral worth compels my admiration? I entering into life-partnership, as I am very much inclined to do, shall I feel that I have a partner possessing qualities that will wear and prove sterling in those trials which assuredly life will bring? Above all, and with the utmost candour of self-scrutiny, am I myself good enough, sound enough, reliable enough, to offer or to allow anyone to link his life with mine?” The material for finding a pretty accurate answer to these questions is never wanting; the pity is that they are so seldom asked—that a strong mutual liking is allowed to settle so momentous an issue by itself. And the strong liking, if we will speak quite frankly, is after all one which the same man may feel, and probably has felt, for more than one girl, the same girl for more than one man. Romeo, before he met Juliet, had sighed as deeply for the fair Rosaline, and with happier fortune might have outlived his passion for the daughter of the house of Capulet, and married some other of Verona’s beauties; nor do we blame the maiden who, having lost her love in the war, and wept him, has not found it impossible to transfer her affections and to make another man her good wife.

*“Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?”*

*Av, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep;  
Your girl is well contented,  
Be still, my lad, and sleep \**



Then, since all this is so well known, established by constant observation of actual cases, is it not worth while to take character into serious account—we will not say in lieu of physical charm, but in addition to it—rather than allow oneself to be swept off one's feet by those qualities which in the nature of things are the least enduring? "The man who does not seem to look beyond the honeymoon," we have heard it said, "generally gets disappointed even in that, and serve him right"; and the remark, if perhaps unduly bitter, at any rate gives pointed expression to the feelings with which one has seen a man—otherwise sane and even cautious—contract marriage with a girl who was mentally null and morally of little worth selfish, frivolous, petty. There is nothing so foolish as to imagine that the mere fact of marriage changes character, which is the result of a thousand previous actions hardened into habits, one might as easily conceive that passing through a door would effect a transformation in a person's stature and appearance

Addressing ourselves in the first place to man—ever the more short sighted, the more easily swayed by his senses—we would call attention to one or two main points. From of old a certain amount of latitude has been allowed to lovers' use of ruses the circumventing of parental over strictness, the fashioning of plausible rather than accurate explanations, and the like, it has always been it always will be so, and the saying that all is fair in love and war is generally accepted as true. But if a girl shows a particular aptitude in this kind of strategy, if she rather glories in the readiness of her invention, in her capacity for "bamboozling" her parents a man might at least ask himself whether this formidable skill practised at one time for his benefit might not at another be as ruthlessly and unscrupulously

employed to his detriment, or to mislead him Jessica, who tramples on her father's affection by running away and robbing him is but a heartless, worthless jade and we wish Lorenzo joy of her, while we cannot miss the sting in Brabantio's parting words to Othello who has abducted his daughter

She has deceived her father and may thee

If a man is prepared with open eyes, to commit his future happiness and peace of mind into the hands of one whom he has found notably lacking in the sense of honour, truthfulness natural gratitude, he must put up with the consequences, but if these do not turn out to his liking, he will have scant cause for going beyond himself in apportioning the blame A weapon is a weapon, and the same hand which can wield it unhesitatingly and with deadly aim against one, can so wield it against another

And the same consideration applies to the girl who flaunts her sexual attractions, and deliberately exploits her power to arouse masculine passion She may either be frankly sensual or a cold and calculating coquette with an eye on a wealthy match preferably with a simpleton, in either case she represents a type to be carefully avoided, at any rate where marriage is in question A man must be more than commonly conceited or more than commonly naïve—the two things often go together—to imagine that the practised and notorious flirt will become a pattern of steadfast loyalty simply by being made *his* wife, and even if he feels disposed to "chance it" for himself he has no right to risk giving his children that particular kind of mother and inheritance One might spend a very agreeable day's picnicking with such a one, but marriage is quite disconcertingly unlike a picnic

And yet again very moderate powers of observation should suffice to establish whether a girl has the true

womanly qualities of helpfulness, unselfishness, tact, whether she possesses real girl-friends and of what stamp, whether her opinions of others are habitually expressed with kindness and generosity, or flavoured with malice and scorn. It is not difficult to see, either, whether she is home loving, and thus likely to prove a home maker, or whether she thinks household duties a bore, whether she is extravagant, or has a sense of the value of money. It should, in fine, be impossible to be much in her company for so much as three months without gathering an array of reliable data as to her character, and he who thinks these matters of minor import in his fiancée, will revise his estimate when she has become his wife.

A woman's judgment is nearly always shrewder than a man's, being less at the mercy of her passions, she looks very decidedly beyond the honeymoon, and often exercises an instinctive prudence denied to the sentimental sex, viz., to man. What she does need to be told more than anything is that by marrying a man who cannot prove his freedom from racial disease she is running a deadly danger, to refrain from making sure on this point from false delicacy or unquestioning trustfulness—"As if George could have anything disgusting of that sort!"—is a grave wrong to herself and the children she hopes to bear, and since she will find it hard to raise the subject herself, some responsible person should do it for her, and see that it is answered "beyond a peradventure."

Sheer infatuation of course, is past reasoning with, and by the time it has worn off, reasoning may be too late, we can merely ask her to bear in mind such truisms as these—that the "dashing blade" too frequently won't "cut ice," that the man who is intemperate before marriage will not prove abstinent after,

and that the delightful dancing partner may make a deplorable life partner

It is by no means unusual to hear a girl declare, as one who is enunciating an obvious axiom—"I could not marry a man I cannot respect," it is far less common to hear a man express, or to find him governed by, the corresponding sentiment. Long racial experience—experience of bitter sorrow—has driven the truth in upon women that without this foundation, i.e., in the absence of qualities which command respect, there can be no prospect of married happiness and that love itself does not survive contempt. Making allowance for many exceptions it is still true that of the two sexes, speaking broadly, man is the sentimentalist, woman the realist, hers is the firmer, more instinctive hold upon one chief reality of marriage, viz., that where character does not supplement love, all the romance in the world will not prevent a match from turning out disastrously. Wherefore we repeat, "*Love, Health and Character, these Three*"

And thus we are brought up against the ultimate truth, that for all the importance, all the indispensableness of its physical side, with which we have been so predominantly concerned in this book, marriage—where it deserves that name—is in essence, and above all, a union of two human spirits for mutual help, mutual education for the attainment of unity in diversity. That is why wedlock is not a field for the legalised, unlimited indulgence of bodily appetite, but a school of self-discipline, and for keeping the body in subjection.

It is not women, but men who need reminding of this, for too many men harbour the notion that matrimony dispenses them from irksome sexual restraint, and resent the idea of *any* check upon the gratification of their desires. We shall not go too far if we point to this

false and degrading assumption as the root-cause of many a marital shipwreck, for a woman feels degraded when she knows that she is regarded simply as a means for stimulating and assuaging a man's passions, and nothing will so soon and so inevitably kill her respect—and thus her love—for her husband as her realisation of the fact that he does so regard and so use her. That is the reason why the conjugal couch has so often proved love's death-bed because of an immoderate insistence upon the things of sense on one side, giving rise to nausea and revolt on the other. There can be few things more bitter for a finely tempered woman, with great capacities for tender companionship, and a native refinement of disposition, than to discover that she has been married with a view to spending her life as the inmate of a monogamous harem, always, such a discovery proves fatal to her love and happiness, and sometimes she goes down under its weight.

A young wife of thirty two died after a married life of some ten years, there seemed no ostensible reason why she should not have got over her illness only the doctor declared that from the first she had made no fight for her life, she manifested no desire to get better. No one had suspected her marriage of being anything but a happy one, for she had never complained, never relaxed the hold she kept over herself. But after her death a sister of hers received a heart broken and heart breaking letter, which revealed her tragedy, the extracts which follow will suffice —

"You think I am happy, because my husband 'loves' me and makes much of me. But I am not happy for I am the slave of a man who is himself the slave of his passions. He has never mastered, he will never master himself, nor has he any idea that it is his duty to do so.

"Do you understand what that means? Can you

realise that I am never *safe* from him, by night or day, in sickness or in health? Whether I want to or not, I have to be at his disposal. How often have I begged him to leave me alone for just a little while, but in vain; and he actually *boasts of his fidelity!* 'A wife's duty is to satisfy her husband'—that is his refrain.

"He 'loves' me in his way; but I could never accustom myself to the rôle of being the mere instrument for the satisfaction of his sensuality. There may be women, placed like myself, whose feelings are blunted to passive acquiescence; it has not been so in my case. And he feels so sure that he is doing no more than claiming his right, enjoying what he is entitled to! He was never taught the duty of self-restraint, he has never exercised any; with an untroubled conscience he has tormented me from our wedding-day onwards. . . . Can you imagine what it means? To be awakened when one is tired, to be importuned when one is ill or unfit, to be disturbed in one's very prayers? I am dying of it. . . ."

One must hope that such an extreme case is altogether exceptional; but there are unhappily plenty of cases, not so extreme, where a husband's want of chivalry and moderation has changed love to something nearer loathing, and made the marriage bond a hateful bondage to the wife. Every doc<sup>t</sup> ~~shows something~~

union must always be sought as a favour by the husband, and accorded as a favour by the wife; that excess cannot help begetting satiety; that a chivalrous voluntary abstinence, when he divines that his overtures would not be welcome, will enhance a wife's respect and affection for her husband more than most other tokens of his tenderness, and will assuredly meet with its reward in due season; and that the old saying is still true which declares that "every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." All mastery begins in self-mastery; and those about to enter matrimony had better realise that marriage is at the best a very complex problem, which they cannot expect to master unless they have themselves and their desires well in hand.

We have written this book because we are deeply convinced that the achievement of a happy marriage, while it is a far more arduous enterprise than is generally realised, is also the one of all others that is most worth while, demanding, to use Stevenson's phrase, all that a man—or a woman—has of fortitude and delicacy. It has its gins and pitfalls, its trials and conflicts, its tempests and pinpricks, but it also provides the finest training-ground for the making of high character, and offers the truest satisfactions of which human nature is capable.

It is because we wish men and women to achieve this happiness, this satisfaction, and because so many miss their way just for lack of indispensable instruction, that we have used very plain terms in dealing with very intimate matters. We sincerely believe that those who have read these chapters in the right spirit, whether they are contemplating marriage or have already entered it, will be spared some mistakes into which they might otherwise have fallen; and since the wellbeing of "

country depends directly upon the number of harmonious and well-ordered families that are to be found among its population, we are not without hope that our labours may prove of use in rendering a wider service to the community

In marriage, more than elsewhere—with its constant calls for mutual consideration, unselfishness, fidelity, devotion, generosity, forbearance—all that is best in us, our noblest powers, find scope for exercise and development; and those who are wise enough so to exercise them will discover the true Reality of Marriage, even a joy which passes not away.



FINIS.

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